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Saipan Tribune

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how safe do you feel in the security of your own home these days?

Let your voice be heard!
Go to
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to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Roughing It
A cold alley in central London is a far cry from a palace—but it was the spot Prince William chose to sleep in.

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Fashion Icon
Usher knows his stuff when it comes to fashion.

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Defects delaying airport's baggage handling system

CPA failed pre-certification process, TSA deadline expired

"At some point in time, TSA may say, Enough is enough, time is up, we gave you 20 days, you've taken three months. So it's time to fix it."
—Mike Conley, federal security director

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Serious defects and deficiencies are delaying the use of the much awaited baggage handling system at the Saipan International Airport, a project that was initiated in 2006, according to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

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Guerrero is CPA's new executive director

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Guerrero

The Commonwealth Ports Authority named Edward Guerrero yesterday as the agency's new executive director.

Guerrero's selection was recommended by the board's personnel

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Fernandez assures revision of personnel policies

Fernandez

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez met with some members of the Faculty Senate yesterday and assured them that the current personnel policies will be revised to consider their plight.

According to the President's Office, six of the eight Faculty Senate members were present during yesterday's meeting at 1:30pm on campus. Faculty Senate president Larry Lee was not among those who attended the meeting.

The Faculty Senate is an 8-member group that serves as the legislative making body of faculty employees while the Faculty Assembly is the larger body comprising all faculty members.

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Saipan girl wins Jonas Brothers' autographed guitar

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Hard Rock Café Saipan operations manager Raynaldo Perez, left, presents Nicole Johanna Arenovski, 12, with an Epiphone Les Paul guitar autographed by American pop rock boy band Jonas Brothers, during a brief ceremony yesterday afternoon at the Hard Rock Café in Garapan.

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Christmas is much sweeter for 12-year-old Nicole Johanna Arenovski, who won an autographed Epiphone Les Paul guitar from the Jonas Brothers, one of today's most popular American pop rock boy bands and an active supporter of diabetes awareness programs in the nation.

"It's a surprise. This is so cool," said Arenovski, as she held the collector's item guitar, which came as

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Federal judge denies Arriola's request for bail. **PAGE 5**

Local

Outgoing Tinian execs stopped from making MPLT loans

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Superior Court issued yesterday an order preventing outgoing Tinian Mayor Jose P. San Nicolas and outgoing Tinian Sen. Joseph M. Mendiola from entering into any loans or investments with the Marianas Public Land Trust on behalf of the Tinian municipality.

Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona ordered San Nicolas and Mendiola not to execute any documents entering into any loans or investments with MPLT for the Tinian municipality without first providing Tinian mayor-elect Ramon M. Dela Cruz and his co-plaintiffs at least 10 days advance notice.

Manglona dismissed the rest of Dela Cruz's and co-plaintiffs' claims and causes of action in the lawsuit against Mendiola.

The judge issued the separate orders yesterday based on the agreement made by the parties involved in the lawsuit.

Dela Cruz and the winners in the Nov. 7 election for the positions in the Senate and House filed the lawsuit to stop the $1 million loan from MPLT, which they said is based on an unconstitutional law.

Dela Cruz's co-plaintiffs are Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider, senator-elect Francisco Q. Cruz, and representative-elect Trenton B. Connor.

The plaintiffs sued outgoing San Nicolas, Mendiola, Tinian Sen. Henry San Nicolas, outgoing Tinian Rep. Edwin P. Aldan, and the Office of the Mayor of Tinian & Aguiguan for breach of fiduciary duty.

The plaintiffs asked the court to declare as unconstitutional Tinian Local Ordinance 16-02, which "authorizes the borrowing of funds from MPLT using Tinian casino gaming revenues and fees, and for other purposes." The ordinance took effect on Oct. 21, 2009, upon Gov. Benigno Fitial's approval.

The plaintiffs asked the court to stop Jose San Nicolas, Henry San Nicolas, and Aldan from pursuing the $1 million loan with MPLT.

The plaintiffs also asked the court to stop the defendants from making any realignment, reassignment, re-appointment, and repositioning of existing employees of the Tinian Municipality to other departments or divisions, as well as appointment of new employees.

They also asked the court to restrain the defendants from reprogramming municipal funds and from entering into unusual, non-regular, and non-recurring business contracts involving the use of funds, resources, and revenue of the Tinian Municipality.

Attorney Michael Dotts, who appeared for all the plaintiffs, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the two orders will prevent the MPLT loan from going forward behind the backs of his clients.

"This was very important because my clients feel the MPLT loan was on very unfavorable terms to Tinian and if that loan were to go forward, it would tie up most of the revenue of Tinian for many years to come," Dotts said.

He said they, however, failed to obtain a preliminary injunction on Tuesday to stop the outgoing mayor from further processing employment conversions of municipal employees.

"Fortunately, Gov. Fitial has already acted to stop the conversions," Dotts said.

He said Judge Manglona indicated she was open to proceeding very quickly with a resolution of the case.

"We were also able to begin laying the groundwork for why we believe the court will eventually rule in our favor," Dotts said.

Safety tips this holiday season

The Department of Public Safety issued yesterday a list of safety tips to prevent injuries and fires caused by firecrackers during the holiday celebration.

"We want our parents, guardians to be on the lookout, do adult supervision on the children because firecrackers nowadays are very powerful," DPS spokesman Eric David told *Saipan Tribune.*

Last year, the Commonwealth Health Center treated mostly juvenile patients with burns in their hands, fingers, and other parts of the body.

"We're trying to avoid that," said David.

So far this holiday season, David said, they have not received any reports yet about firecracker-related injuries or fires.

"We just want to be on the safe side and have people take precautions. We want these people buying firecrackers to supervise their children," he said.

To avoid injuries and fires during the holiday season, David said the DPS Fire Prevention Section is urging the community to exercise the following safety precautions when handling fireworks:

■ Do not let anyone under 18 play with fireworks without close adult supervision.

■ Never allow small children to play with firecrackers.

■ Read and follow the instructions of each firework.

■ Never light fireworks indoors; use them outdoors in a clear area away from houses, dry leaves or grass and flammable materials.

■ Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for pouring on fireworks that don't go off.

■ Never relight fireworks that appear to have gone out.

■ Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting it.

■ Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.

■ Don't experiment with homemade fireworks.

■ Avoid popping fireworks on the road as this could cause a serious traffic accident.

■ Store fireworks in a dry, cool place. Check instructions for special storage directions.

David said people should contact the Fire Prevention Section at 664-9116 if they have further questions. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NOTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS BEFORE THE COMMISIONER OF INSURANCE.

JOHN HANCOCK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
Applicant

In the Matter of the Application for Withdrawal and to Permanently Discontinue the Transaction of Insurance Business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Pursuant to 20 NMIAC §20-40. 1-210

Notice is hereby given that John Hancock Life Insurance Company of 601 Congress Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210, intends to withdraw and to permanently discontinue the transaction of insurance business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Effective December 31, 2009, John Hancock Life Insurance Company will cease to exist as a separate entity as a result of a merger with its affiliate, John Hancock Life Insurance Company (U.S.A.), which is the surviving insurer.

All persons interested in this matter should write to the Company at the above address or call 617-663-2486 or the Office of the Commissioner of Banking and Insurance, Department of Commerce at Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. 664-3000.

Fitial: I wish there'll be no more federal intrusions

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has one Christmas wish for the CNMI: "I wish that we do not continue to get any more federal intrusions."

The federal government took control of CNMI immigration on Nov. 28 pursuant to U.S. Public Law 110-229, becoming the second to the last U.S. territory to control its own immigration. American Samoa still controls its borders.

The governor, who is currently off island for a Christmas vacation, said he does not have qualms with the federal government's takeover of immigration and border control, but control of local labor should be left with the CNMI government.

Fitial's wish comes at a time when his administration is still waiting for the complete adjudication of his lawsuit against the U.S. government over federalization of CNMI immigration.

"We can't even appeal the lawsuit [decision] because we still have one major component of that lawsuit pending. So only after the lawsuit is completely adjudicated, then we will make a decision whether to appeal or not," Fitial said.

The governor said this is the reason why he still cannot say when to terminate the government's contract with the U.S.-based law firm of Jenner & Block, which represents the CNMI government in its federalization lawsuit.

Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan) said yesterday she has yet to receive from the Office of the Attorney General additional financial records related to the federalization lawsuit.

She said she expects the records will finally be turned over not later than this week.

U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Judge Paul L. Friedman issued a preliminary injunction to prevent DHS' CNMI transitional worker classification rule from going into effect without giving the Commonwealth and other stakeholders time to comment, as required under the Administrative Procedures Act.

DHS' U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services reopened the comment period for the interim final rule on the CNMI Transitional Worker Classification. The additional 30-day comment period will close on Jan. 8, 2010.

USCIS said it will consider comments received during the entire public comment period in its development of the final rule.

Off island

Fitial left Tuesday for an off island Christmas vacation. Government offices will be closed at noon today for the Christmas holiday.

Teresa Kim, the interim press secretary, said Fitial was in Guam Tuesday afternoon en route to the Philippines "to spend the holidays with his in-laws."

"He will return on the 29th," said Kim, who is also the legal counsel for Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos and co-chair of the Inauguration Committee.

Inos is now the acting governor until Fitial's return on Tuesday.

Fitial and Inos will be sworn into office on Jan. 11, 2010, at 3pm. Fitial is only the second governor in CNMI history to be re-elected, and the first to win in the CNMI's first gubernatorial runoff election.

Heavy rain floods parts of Saipan

The CNMI Emergency Management Office is warning the public to be careful when driving due to heavy rains that is causing floods in certain areas of the island.

EMO said that at 5:20pm yesterday, surface observations and National Weather Service radar indicated heavy rainfall was occurring over Tinian and Saipan. Affected areas include Garapan, Chalan Kanoa, As Perdido, the traffic light by the Shell gas station in Dandan, San Antonio, and Susupe.

The rainfall was being generated by a tropical disturbance centered to the southwest of Guam. Residents can also expect lightning during heavy showers.

One to two inches of rainfall has already fallen since late afternoon yesterday and up to two additional inches of rainfall per hour was still expected in some locations until 12am, EMO said.

EMO is advising the public, especially motorists and residents in low-lying areas, to take extra precautionary measures for ponds of water on roadways, poor drainages and possible debris on roads. ***(EMO)***

Full-day sessions eyed for Head Start

The director of the Public School System's Head Start Program, Keiko Yamagata, disclosed Wednesday that they are currently looking at the possibility of offering full-day sessions at all Head Start centers on three islands.

The program, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides developmental services for low-income children ages 3 to 5 and social services for their families.

Yamagata told the Board of Education that the program is now doing a community assessment to determine whether full-day sessions are needed. Any decision made will be based on the assessment reports that will be submitted by each center on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian.

The CNMI Head Start is mandated to serve 462 kids every program year. In the past, the CNMI was allowed an enrollment population of 579 children but this was cut down since two years ago due to reduced federal assistance.

The program gets $1.7 million in federal funding every year. However, its local matching fund went down from almost $700,000 to just $350,000.

Yamagata said the Head Start program has an average attendance of 87 percent. Services offered include education, health, parent involvement, and social services.

At a recent assembly, Board of Education member Marylou S. Ada was appointed as the Head Start Policy Council coordinator for the CNMI. ***(Moneth Deposa)***

DHS makes technical changes to CNMI's federalization rules

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security made technical corrections to an "inadvertent error that was made in the interim final rule" applying immigration regulations to the CNMI.

The corrected rule is effective Dec. 22, 2009.

The federal government took over CNMI immigration on Nov. 28 pursuant to U.S. Public Law 110-229 or the Consolidated Natural Resources Act.

On Oct. 28, DHS and the U.S. Department of Justice published an interim final rule in the Federal Register implementing conforming amendments to their respective regulations to comply with the CNRA, or the federalization law.

In the amendment to 8 CFR 299.1 and 8 CFR 299.5, DHS said it inadvertently omitted the edition date and Office of Management and Budget control number for the new Form I-9 CNMI or the "CNMI Employment Eligibility Verification."

The edition date for the Form I-9 CNMI is "11-12-09."

The assigned OMB control number for the same form has been revised from "1615-XXXX" to "1615-0112."

DHS and DOJ amended their regulations to conform with the law that federalizes CNMI immigration, including a halt to granting asylum during the transition period from Nov. 28, 2009 to Dec. 31, 2014.

The amendments also remove references to the CNMI as not being subject to the Immigration and Nationality Act, and update the definition of the geographical "United States" to include the CNMI for immigration purposes.

The rule also specifically amends references to the geographical "United States" and its territories and possessions; alien classifications authorized for employment; documentation acceptable for Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9); employment of unauthorized aliens; and adjustment of status of immediate relatives admitted under the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program.

DHS administers and enforces the INA and most laws related to the immigration and naturalization of aliens.

DOJ, meanwhile, is responsible for the immigration courts that provide administrative adjudications of removal proceedings as well as the Board of Immigration Appeals that hears appeals of immigration court decisions and certain DHS decisions.

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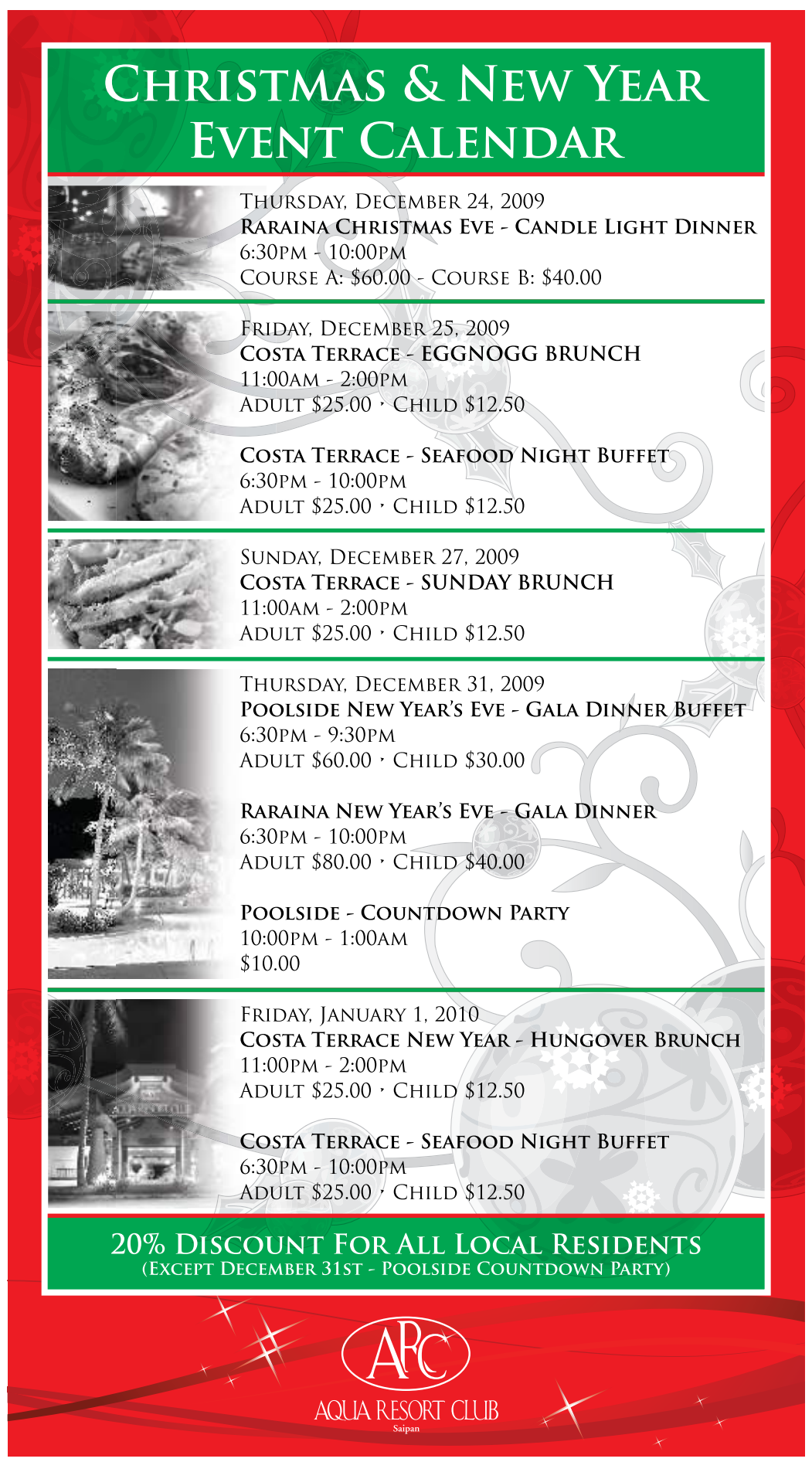
CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR EVENT CALENDAR
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2009
RARAINA CHRISTMAS EVE - CANDLE LIGHT DINNER
6:30PM - 10:00PM
COURSE A: $60.00 - COURSE B: $40.00
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2009
COSTA TERRACE - EGGNOGG BRUNCH
11:00AM - 2:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
COSTA TERRACE - SEAFOOD NIGHT BUFFET
6:30PM - 10:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2009
COSTA TERRACE - SUNDAY BRUNCH
11:00AM - 2:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2009
POOLSIDE NEW YEAR'S EVE - GALA DINNER BUFFET
6:30PM - 9:30PM
ADULT $60.00 • CHILD $30.00
RARAINA NEW YEAR'S EVE - GALA DINNER
6:30PM - 10:00PM
ADULT $80.00 • CHILD $40.00
POOLSIDE - COUNTDOWN PARTY
10:00PM - 1:00AM
$10.00
FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2010
COSTA TERRACE NEW YEAR - HUNGOVER BRUNCH
11:00PM - 2:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
COSTA TERRACE - SEAFOOD NIGHT BUFFET
6:30PM - 10:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
20% DISCOUNT FOR ALL LOCAL RESIDENTS
(EXCEPT DECEMBER 31ST - POOLSIDE COUNTDOWN PARTY)
APC
AQUA RESORT CLUB
Saipan

Lawmakers OK scholarship for nursing students

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

On a 9-6 vote, the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation narrowly approved Tuesday afternoon a local bill authorizing Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance for nursing and medical students in the CNMI, eight months after a local law was signed authorizing SHEFA scholarship for those enrolled at the Northern Marianas Trades Institute.

Rep. Oscar M. Babauta (Cov-Saipan) said yesterday that House Local Bill 16-36, HD1 will make SHEFA scholarship available to students enrolled in nursing and other medical programs in the CNMI.

Babauta said there are schools other than Northern Marianas College that now offer nursing and other medical-related courses in the CNMI, including Emmanuel College, University of Loyola at CNMI, International Business and Professional College, and Eucon International School of Saipan, and American Mediscience University.

Babauta co-sponsored the local bill with Rep. Justo Quitugua (D-Saipan).

HLB 16-36, HD1 now heads to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial for action.

But one of the six Saipan lawmakers who voted against the bill, Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan), said her main concern was giving assistance to institutions that are not U.S. accredited.

"SHEFA is already giving scholarships to nursing students. I think that the real intent of the local bill is to give assistance to students in schools that don't have U.S. accreditation. And there didn't seem to be comments received from SHEFA, NMC and other agencies concerned," Sablan said.

Besides Sablan, those who voted "no" on the SHEFA bill were Rep. Ed Salas (R-Saipan), Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan), Rep. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan), Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan), and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan).

Those who approved the bill were Babauta, SNILD chairman Ray Tebuteb (R-Saipan), Sen. Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan), Rep. Frank Dela Cruz, Rep. David Apatang (R-Saipan), Rep. Rosemond Santos (R-Saipan), Rep. Ray Palacios (Cov-Saipan), Rep. Joe Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan), and Rep. Joe Reyes (R-Saipan).

Absent during the voting on the bill were Quitugua, Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider (R-Saipan), House Floor Leader Joseph Camacho, Rep. Diego Benavente (R-Saipan), Sen. Maria "Frica" Pangelinan (D-Saipan), and Sen. Luis Crisostimo (D-Saipan).

HLB 16-36 authorizes SHEFA scholarship for students enrolled in postsecondary vocational or training programs pursuing a degree or certification in nursing or any other related medical program within the CNMI.

Early this year, Saipan Local Law 16-8 increased the scope of financial aid recipients to include those without a high school diploma or its equivalent who have enrolled in a trade-type institution.

Babauta said many in the community would like to pursue nursing, hoping to find rewarding work after graduation and competitive wages in the CNMI's hospitals and clinics.

"The purpose of this act is to clearly and expressly permit financial assistance to those who have chosen to pursue a career in nursing or other related medical occupations," he said.

Unlike the bill granting SHEFA scholarship to trades institute students, Babauta's bill does not provide a condition that those receiving SHEFA should stay and work in the CNMI for a certain time in exchange for the scholarship money.

SAIPAN GIRL

From Page 1

a Christmas gift yesterday through the Hard Rock Café Sacramento and the California Diabetes Association.

Arenovski received her autographed guitar from Hard Rock Café Saipan operations manager Raynaldo Perez during a surprise ceremony for her at the Hard Rock Café in Garapan yesterday afternoon.

Her father, Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Jim Arenovski, said his sister, Andrea Arenovski Shephard, bought raffle tickets and bought items from the "Lines, Vines & Trying Times" menu at the Hard Rock Café in Sacramento in the summer.

Shephard wrote Nicole Johanna Arenovski's name on the ticket, which won the raffle drawing among thousands of ticket buyers.

The raffle drawing was part of the Jonas Brothers' support of diabetes awareness programs. One of the brothers, Nick Jonas, was diagnosed in November 2005 with Type 1 Diabetes and has since been using his celebrity status to raise awareness on the need for research to find a cure for the disease.

"I didn't expect to win," Nicole, a seventh grader at Whispering Palms School, said after receiving the guitar.

Jim Arenovski said his daughter could not go to California so the guitar was instead shipped to Hard Rock Café Saipan, for yesterday's presentation, which came as a surprise for Nicole.

The Arenovskis had a lunch at Hard Rock Café yesterday, and the father invited some of Nicole's friends to witness the presentation.

Jim Arenovski said the raffle drawing for a cause is a nice way to remind everyone how dangerous diabetes is. The CNMI has a high rate of diabetes.

The Jonas Brothers gained popularity from the Disney Channel children's television network. From Wyckoff, New Jersey, the band consists of three brothers: Paul Kevin Jonas II (Kevin Jonas), Joseph Adam Jonas (Joe Jonas), and Nicholas Jerry Jonas (Nick Jonas).

In the summer of 2008, they starred in the Disney Channel original movie *Camp Rock*. The band has released four albums: *It's About Time, Jonas Brothers, A Little Bit Longer,* and *Lines, Vines and Trying Times.*

In 2008, the group was nominated for the Best New Artist award at the 51st Grammy Awards and won the award for Breakthrough Artist at the American Music Awards. As of May 2009, before the release of *Lines, Vines and Trying Times,* they have sold over 8 million albums worldwide, according to Wikipedia.

FERNANDEZ

From Page 1

Yesterday's meeting came about after a significant number of faculty members adopted a vote of "no confidence" in Fernandez due to her hiring and firing practices at the college.

The president described yesterday's meeting as very productive.

"They have been open, candid, and very informative," she said in a statement to *Saipan Tribune*, adding that she will continue her meetings with faculty members to hear their individual concerns.

Fernandez said much of the discussion centered on personnel and contract issues. "I will ensure that the suggestions are taken into account as we update the college's personnel policies."

The Faculty Senate, she added, has agreed to continue their meeting on Monday to address more specific concerns.

"We're still working out many things, but we're moving in the right direction," she said, adding that despite all these challenges, the college is moving forward with important projects and programs.

She cited the progress of the facilities master plan where basic schematics have been drawn up for a new campus that will be safer, more efficient, and more conducive to learning.

"Now that accreditation has been reaffirmed, we are also moving forward with new programs in Rehabilitation Human Services Program and School of Education programs in special education and early childhood. These new programs will meet critical needs in our community for rehabilitative services and early childhood and SPED teachers," said Fernandez.

She also cited the millions of dollars in funding that NMC got from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This money, she said, will support new programs and projects, including critically needed positions, upgrades to NMC's information technology infrastructure, and professional development opportunities for the faculty and staff.

Proposed contract, HR policies

Saipan Tribune learned that two proposals presented by the NMC management were rejected by the faculty during its recent meetings.

The proposed indefinite contract was rejected by the Faculty Senate due to what they said were unacceptable conditions in the termination and non-renewal of employees. The indefinite contract for faculty employees was initiated five years ago during the term of Danny Wyatt as Faculty Senate president. Its main objective is to give employees security in their jobs. This was never acted upon and was only revived by the current NMC management in September.

Meantime, the proposed comprehensive revamp of HR policies was also rejected by the Faculty Assembly due to some legal issues, ambiguities, and what they described as "serious defects" in its provisions.

GUERRERO

From Page 1

committee, which screened three applicants for the post.

Committee chair Fermin Sakisat told *Saipan Tribune* the other applicants for the position were acting executive director and seaport manager MaryAnn Lizama and Velma Palacios.

Sakisat said that Guerrero was chosen based on his qualification, educational background, and experience.

Guerrero was approved a one-year $70,000 contract. He replaced Efrain Camacho to the position. Camacho resigned in October, a month before the expiration of his one-year contract.

"I applied for the job and the interview was done last Friday. I am very happy about being selected for the position. As you know, I came with very extensive experience in government, having served various capacities in many agencies and departments," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Guerrero previously served as secretary of the Department of Public Works, Public Health, trustee for the defunct Marianas Public Lands Authority, consultant to the Legislature, member of the NMC Board of Regents, and one term as representative in the 15th Legislature.

He was once an ally of former governor Juan N. Babauta but he later switched to the Covenant Party in the last general election.

Guerrero described his new job as a "big challenge."

"I know it's a big challenge. But I've always wanted to work for CPA because I believe that I can help this agency realize the resources that are needed to improve the ports authority. I am looking forward to working with the FAA and other federal agencies. …It's my goal to make CPA one of the best in the Pacific region," he said.

Among his priorities, Guerrero said, is CPA's compliance with both airport and seaport indenture agreements.

He also plans to re-assess all CPA liabilities to enhance revenue collection.

"There would be a lot of planning… both short-term and long-term. We will prioritize the funding and ensure that each island is equally taken cared of based on priorities and not just based on projects," he added.

CPA received a total of $104.3 million in airport improvement projects funds from the FAA in the last eight fiscal years. From 1999 to 2007, 49 projects were approved and provided funding by Federal Aviation Administration, a majority of which were for the Saipan International Airport.

DEFECTS

From Page 1

During a special board meeting yesterday, federal security director Mike Conley disclosed that serious defects in the equipment must be corrected immediately so it could be certified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration.

The new baggage handling system, which cost about $15 million and was funded by the Federal Aviation Administration, was completed in 2007. It has yet to become fully operational, though, because it lacks the needed certification.

The equipment includes an explosive detection system and a baggage handling system, both vital in the screening process at the airport.

Conley disclosed that the system failed a TSA pre-certification test in 2007.

In September, TSA gave the ports authority 20 days to correct all mechanical defects but CPA did not get back to the federal agency to submit a progress report.

"CPA was given 20 days at the beginning of September…and we're already in the end of December and we have had no response. I think it's critical that we correct the deficiencies that exist, report to TSA and ask them to bring a certification team and re-look at the system," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

Conley said there were also some other factors that contributed to the delay, but one thing is certain for the TSA official. "Time went by and nobody really grabbed the horn of those things," he said.

It was only during the term of former executive director Efrain Camacho that the project was identified as among CPA's priorities, he added.

"We're making good progress [since then]…and I think we need to finish it up. It's been more than two years that we're working on these [defects]," he said.

Camacho served as CPA executive director for less than a year; he resigned from the post two months before his contract expired in November.

If the problems are not immediately addressed, Conley said CPA might lose this important project.

"At some point in time, TSA may say, 'Enough is enough…time is up… we gave you 20 days, you've taken three months and I don't see any progress report.' So it's time to fix it," he said.

Lee Cabrera, a former CPA executive director who now works for TSA, told the board that among the deficiencies identified is in the "merging process."

"The brain of the system seems to forget," he said.

New contract

The board unanimously approved yesterday a contract for Vander Lande Industries to fix the mechanical deficiencies of the baggage handling system. The nine-month contract costs $445,000, with an initial payment of 30 percent upon signing, or $135,000.

Conley lauded the board's decision.

"We need to put the whole packet together and I think the approval of this contract is a giant step to success," he told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that part of the contract is to train CPA personnel how to operate the system.

CPA comptroller Frances Mafnas told the board, though, that CPA has yet to identify funds for the contract. She said she acknowledges the urgency of the situation and asked the board a week for her to identify the funds that will be used for this purpose.

Acting CPA executive director MaryAnn Lizama stressed that approval of the contract is critical to the completion of the project. She recommended to the board to go ahead with the approval and the management would look for the money.

The baggage handling system is expected to speed up operations at the departure and check-in counters of the airport. Long lines will be eliminated and would give tourists and passengers ample time to visit the airport's concessionaires.

Once fully operational, all scanners will be removed from the counters. Instead, luggage will run through the explosives detection system and baggage handling system as part of the screening process.

Federal judge denies Arriola's request for bail

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The federal court denied yesterday attorney Joseph Aldan Arriola's request for his temporary release to a third-party custodian.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson, who is off-island, conducted the hearing via telephone.

Before the counsels presented their arguments, Munson stated his tentative ruling to deny Arriola's bail motion, based on the pleadings submitted in court. The judge basically agreed with the U.S. government's position that Arriola is a flight risk.

Steven Pixley, the court-appointed counsel for Arriola, argued that conditions will assure Arriola's court appearance and that he poses no danger to the community.

Munson

Pixley said there is no evidence supporting a finding that Arriola's release to a third party custodian would endanger the safety of persons in the community.

Accordingly, he said, the court should determine whether condition of release would assure Arriola's appearance when required.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kirk Schuler pointed out, though, that Arriola had already fled the CNMI once to escape responsibility for his actions. He said a third party custodian, or other conditions, cannot assure that Arriola will appear as required or will not try to escape again.

"Defendant is a flight risk, and should be detained pending trial," the prosecutor stressed.

After denying the motion, Munson remanded Arriola to the custody of the U.S. Marshal. He granted Arriola's waiver of a speedy trial. He set the jury trial for March 1, 2010, at 9am.

The U.S. government had charged Arriola and former Rita Kaipat estate administrator Luis Pelisamen with wire fraud and money laundering for stealing $625,575 from the estate's account. Arriola was the then counsel of Pelisamen. Pelisamen was arrested and subsequently found guilty.

Arriola fled to the Philippines, where authorities arrested him on June 16, 2009. The Philippine government deported him to Saipan on Nov. 25, 2009. Since then, he has been detained at the Department of Corrections in Susupe.

Paguio is grand prize winner in IT&E long distance promo

IT&E

IT&E sales associate Brad Ruszala, left, presents grand prize winner Arnel I. Paguio with an ASUS Netbook and three months free wireless broadband service from IT&E.

IT&E concluded its Call the World and Win Prepaid Long Distance promotion with a bang, with grand prize winner Arnel I. Paguio walking away with an ASUS Netbook and three months of free wireless broadband service from IT&E.

Paguio wasn't present when the winning entry forms were randomly selected this past Friday, Dec. 18, during IT&E's final After Hours Sale in Chalan Laulau, but he didn't have to be. While hundreds of customers took advantage of special holiday savings, the local stylist was working, unaware that one of his entries was about to bring him some extra holiday cheer.

Customers who purchased an IT&E or PTI Long Distance Card between Oct. 1 and Dec. 18 received one entry form for every $5 spent. The lucky winners took home a number of prizes including $100 in IT&E and PTI prepaid long distance cards, movie passes from Hollywood Theaters, $150 in gas from Shell Marianas, $50 from the Joeten Superstore, a giant Christmas stocking filled with gifts, an iPod Shuffle and a Samsung Alias.

IT&E has more customer appreciation promotions coming in 2010, as the New Year will be ushered in with the Call & Fly promo that will reward 120 customers from the CNMI and Guam with round-trip tickets to the Philippines. ***(PR)***

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DELTA PLAYS SANTA CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Commonwealth Health Center's Pediatric Ward received early Christmas presents, blankets from Delta Airlines on Friday, Dec. 18, 2009. Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez, CFO Esther Muna, acting Deputy Secretary for Hospital Administration John Flores, Nursing Supervisor Salome Castro and Pediatric Unit Manager Erina Olkeril were on hand to receive the blankets from Richard Parsons, general manager for Delta Guam & Saipan; Chris Concepcion, and Esther Sound of Delta Airlines Saipan.

Federal court allows Joyner's release

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The federal court allowed yesterday the temporary release of suspected methamphetamine trafficker Jawn Joyner.

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David A. Wiseman granted Joyner's request to release him to two third-party custodians temporarily.

During yesterday's hearing, Wiseman said the U.S. Probation Office has already interviewed the potential third party custodians for Joyner and found them acceptable to the court.

Wiseman said he would allow Joyner's release under certain conditions: that Joyner jointly execute an unsecured $10,000 bond with his third party custodians, that he not leave Saipan without court permission, and that he can't change residence without first notifying the court.

Joyner was also ordered to refrain from using or possessing a narcotic drug or other substances unless prescribed by a doctor.

Wiseman said Joyner should be subjected to random drug testing, participate in the electronic monitoring program, and refrain from excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages.

The judge said Joyner should participate in a home confinement program and not leave his residence unless in the company of his custodians.

On Tuesday, the federal court allowed Joyner's fiancée, Sharee Demapan Diaz, to visit him once to discuss her future with him, including a resolution of their case. Diaz is also facing "ice" trafficking charges.

Drug Enforcement Administration agents arrested Diaz and Joyner last October after the U.S. government filed a complaint charging the two with conspiracy to distribute "ice."

The complaint also charged Joyner and Diaz with three counts of possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

DEA said Diaz was Joyner's retail seller, runner and intermediary.

NEWS BRIEFS

Live-fire, laser training on FDM

SANTA RITA, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct live-fire and laser training exercises on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on Dec. 29, from 8am to 9pm, and Dec. 30, from 8am to 3pm.

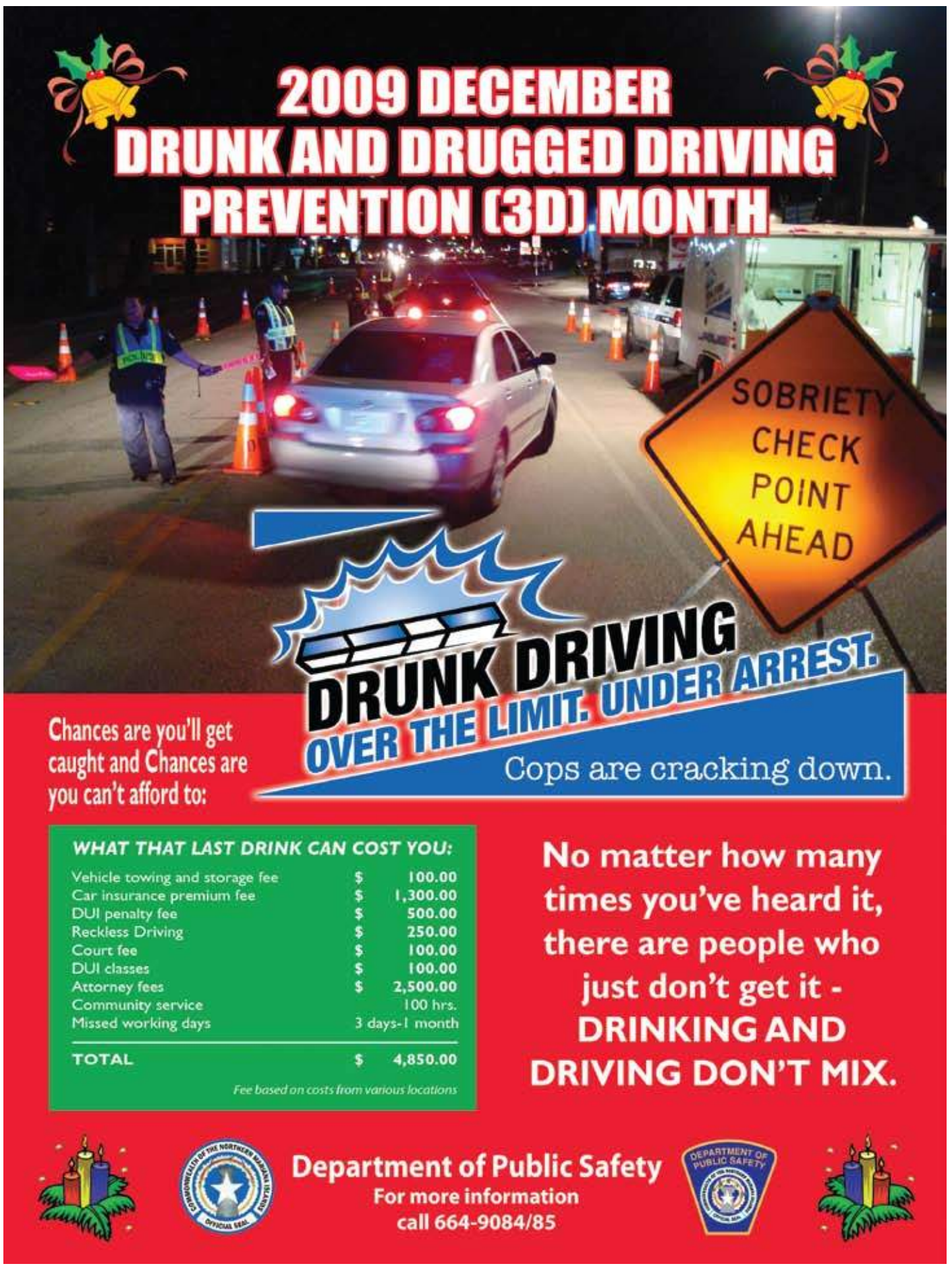
The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon de Medinilla Training Area on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. The public, especially fisherman, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, are advised to stay clear from this area during the times and dates indicated.

Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides access frequency that supports established training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. ***(PR)***

Missing dog

Jake disappeared on Monday, Dec. 22, at about 8pm. He's a friendly 20-lb mix and an adventurous runner. Contact Adam Hardwicke at 287-2326 or via email at adam.hardwicke@gmail.com with any information regarding his whereabouts.

A picture of Jake is available on the PAWS homepage at http://paws-saipan.org/. ***(PR)***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COMMONWEALTH ZONING BOARD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
for
TJ Amusements, Inc.

The public is invited to provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this Conditional Use application #2009-2832, portion of Lot 013 D 42 (Garapan Fishing Base)

Date : January 6, 2010, Wednesday
Time : 5:30 pm
Place : Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan.

Above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the projects may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may also be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office no later than 4:30 pm, January 7, 2010. Written comments may be submitted via e-mail to staff@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or delivered to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please contact Victor Barrett, Zoning Administrator, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Division 3 of Title 10 CMC).

/s/ Herminia M. Fusco, Board Chairperson

Fitial: Termination for those 'delaying' the ARRA projects

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial warned Executive Branch personnel of "swift and final action which includes termination of employment" if they are found causing unjustified delay in capital improvement projects and other projects funded by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The governor issued a Dec. 18 memo mandating all Executive Branch departments to ensure that no unjustified delays in the proper and lawful procurement, selection, and execution of contractual relationships inhibit the ability of the CNMI government to expediently execute and complete projects.

He said his administration will not tolerate individuals within the government from delaying project movement for any reason.

"Delays of either ARRA or CIP funded projects due to inefficiency within any agency in the administration will result in swift and final action which includes termination of employment," Fitial warned.

In his one-page memo, the governor said it is of utmost importance that his administration works in unison to ensure that time-sensitive funds are obligated and subsequently expended.

"Direction from ARRA and CIP leads must be adhered to without exception," he added.

The governor added that should he receive a report that any department is unwarranted in causing a delay in project completion, "the department head will be held accountable and dealt with accordingly."

Commerce Secretary Michael Ada and CIP projects coordinator Vicky Villagomez are leading and coordinating the ARRA and CIP-funded projects.

"There should be no need to reiterate the administration's directive with regards to this matter and full compliance is mandated," the governor added.

The CNMI has been awarded and received millions in ARRA money from the federal government but the government has yet to disclose the exact amount so far awarded, received and spent to date.

High surf advisory in effect

A weak weather disturbance will bring a few more showers and thunderstorms to Marianas waters before it moves away to the west, according to the CNMI Emergency Management Office yesterday.

Winds and seas are expected to slowly subside the rest of the week. Combined seas of 9 to 10 feet should fall to near 7 feet by tonight.

EMO said the high surf advisory remains in effect until this morning at 6am. A small craft advisory is also in effect until 6am today.

High surf will affect exposed reefs and beaches in the Marianas, producing dangerous rip currents. Expect hazardous surf of 7 to 9 feet on west and north facing reefs, subsiding below hazardous levels early Thursday morning.

Seas 10 feet or greater and wind gusts of 22 knots or higher are expected to produce conditions hazardous to small craft.

EMO is strongly advising the public to avoid venturing near exposed reefs and beaches, especially those along north and west facing reefs as rip currents are life threatening.

"Inexperienced mariners, particularly those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in these conditions. Exercise caution, especially when entering or leaving harbors and inlets and near reef lines," EMO said. ***(EMO)***

During this Holiday Season, my family and I would like to send our prayers for a safe Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to everyone here in the CNMI and abroad, most especially to all our CNMI Sons and Daughters serving in the U.S. Armed Forces here and throughout the World.
I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation for your vote of confidence to serve as your Representative in the upcoming 17th CNMI House of Representatives.
Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!
Congressman-Elect,
Antonio P. Sablan & Family

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
From My Family to Yours
May the Joys of the Christmas Season fill your hearts as you have done with mine through your continued support and encouragement.
Kilili and Family
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan

Red flag up at 19 Saipan beaches

The Division of Environment Quality has raised the red flag on 19 beach sites on Saipan and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until notified.

The affected sites are Wing Beach, San Roque School, Plumeria Hotel, Tanapag Meeting Hall, Central Repair Shop, DPW Channel Bridge, South Puerto Rico Dump, Smiling Cove Marina, American Memorial Park, Micro Beach, Fiesta drainage, Samoa housing, Hafa-Adai Hotel, Garapan Fishing Dock, Garapan Beach, Garapan Beach drainage, Civic Center, Sugar Dock, and Chalan Piao Beach.

DEQ said samples collected from these locations contained fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water.

For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

Japan sets May deadline to resolve US base dispute

TOKYO (AP)—Japan aims to resolve a dispute with the United States over the relocation of an American military base on the southern island of Okinawa by May, the defense minister said Tuesday.

While setting May as the deadline, Defense Minister Toshifumi Kitazawa insisted Tokyo hopes to settle the issue as quickly as possible.

The relocation of the U.S. military base on Okinawa is at the center of a growing dispute between Japan and the United States. Under a 2006 plan, the U.S. base was to be moved to a less crowded part of northern Okinawa.

Washington wants Tokyo to stick to the 2006 agreement and hopes for a resolution on the relocation issue by the end of this year.

But Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama recently postponed a decision for several more months, stopping short of setting a deadline.

Hatoyama has suggested the relocation site could be changed—perhaps even to a site off Okinawa.

The 2006 relocation plan, made under the previous conservative Japanese government, was aimed at lightening the load on Okinawa, which hosts more than half the 47,000 U.S. troops in Japan under a security pact.

Part of the plan involved moving about 8,000 Marines from Okinawa to the U.S. territory of Guam by 2014. But the U.S. military says that plan cannot move forward until Futenma's replacement facility is finalized.

Hatoyama, whose party came to power after a landslide election in August, has promised that Japan would adopt a less subservient relationship with the United States.

But the premier has stressed that the U.S. security alliance is still the cornerstone of Japan's diplomacy.

THE LION KING
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• Division of Youth Services Youth Development Program Toy Drive
• Saipan Southern High School Manta Ray Band Carnegie Hall Trip Donation
• Marianas High School School Supply Drive Donation
• CNMI Coastal Clean Up Assistance
• CNMI Operational Home Front Care Packages Assistance and Donation
• Island 2 Island CNMI Samoa Tsunami Relief Drive Assistance and Donation
• CNMI Fire Victim Donation
• Rotary Club Vladivostok-Eco Warm Windows Drive (Donated Windows for Pediatric Unit)
• Annual Man'Amko Appreciation Luncheon
• CNMI Boy Scout Donation
• Commonwealth Health Center Pediatric Unit Donation
Thank you for making this a successful Rotary year and we look forward to many more!
Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
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"The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands"

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 24, 1998

Panel weighs green card

The Economic Recovery and Revitalization Task Force eyes the possibility of granting residency to businessmen as a way of attracting investors to the CNMI, a plan patterned after Guam which has made the neighboring island an investment hub in the region. Such proposal is among the recommendations initially outlined by the task force as come-on to investors, whose presence in the Northern Marianas have thinned since the implementation of stringent business requirements early last year. Potential investors frowned at a law requiring them to put up a $100,000 security bond on top of $150,000 in actual assets, which was designed to curb the proliferation of mom-and-pop-type of investments.

Villanueva optimistic of economic recovery

Newly-appointed Commerce Secretary Frankie Villanueva yesterday said he is optimistic that the Northern Marianas will be able to hurdle the effects of Asia's financial crisis because the island offers many economic advantages different from the rest of the countries in the region. However, he said the recovery of the island depends primarily on the improvement of the economic situation in Asia, specifically, Japan. He noted that the strengthening of the yen against the U.S. dollar is a positive sign since it will allow more Japanese tourists to travel to the CNMI. "We have enjoyed a period of 10 to 15 years of uninterrupted economic growth. However, we must understand that economic slowdown is part of an ordinary economic cycle in any country. What we need most at this moment is the confidence in knowing that the economy will eventually turn around," said Villanueva.

Dec. 24, 1999

CDA: Don't alter $50-M CIP plan

Commonwealth Development Authority Board Chairman John S. Tenorio yesterday warned the Senate against changing the original plan on the $50.8 million capital improvement projects, saying this would only jeopardize their implementation. He said the proposal by senators to borrow additional $10 million from Bank of Guam on top of the $30 million loan initially secured by the government will delay use of the funds as it will mean months of processing by the bank. "There will be problems by raising the amount of the loan because this is an interim financing and we have placed everything to our underwriters and bond counsels as well as to Bank of Guam to utilize the $30 million," Mr. Tenorio told in an interview.

Investigation of ex-SBDC director pushed

The former director of the Small Business Development Center by the Northern Marianas College may have used his position to steer federal funds given to the agency to jockey for his current position, according to Senate Floor Leader Pete P. Reyes. The Legislature, along with the Office of Insular Affairs, should investigate the recent economic conference on the CNMI for alleged wrongdoing committed by Jack Peters who now heads the Pacific Islands SBDC Network based in the University of Guam. In a statement, Mr. Reyes claimed the ex-SBDC director steered the OIA grants to favor a certain firm owned by David O'Brien, former interim director of PISBDCN who also had direct authority over the local office here.

Dec. 24, 2002

A Christmas without rebates?

It appears that the $19-million loan agreement meant to pay off overdue tax rebates/refunds may not be sealed in time to have the checks ready for Christmas Day as earlier hoped. This, as the administration-as of yesterday-was still locked in negotiations with the Bank of Guam. Gov. Juan N. Babauta reportedly said last night that the negotiating parties were trying to work out some conditions in the loan agreement. The local chief executive and Attorney General Ramona V. Manglona reportedly communicated with the Guam-based counsel of Bank of Guam via telephone yesterday.

JAL Group brings in more tourists

The Commonwealth Ports Authority disclosed yesterday that Japan Airlines and its sister company, JALWays, have increased their passenger load this holiday season as the airline company switched from DC10 airplanes to Boeing 747s. CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas said the change have brought in more than 100 additional passengers from Japan for each flight. Besides the aircraft switch, the holiday season also contributed to the increased incoming traffic, Salas said, as well as the flights that were diverted from Guam to Saipan.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Justice delayed

"I didn't kill her. I never saw her. I am sorry she died, because her death has ruined my life." The truth of those words—spoken 27 years ago by Donald E. Gates as he was being sentenced to life in prison for the murder of a D.C. woman—was confirmed this week. Mr. Gates is finally free, but what the judge called the "absolutely appalling" circumstances of this case merit further investigation.

Mr. Gates, 58, was released Tuesday from jail by D.C. Superior Court Judge Fred B. Ugast after DNA tests revealed that another man committed the crime. Prosecutors had claimed that Mr. Gates attempted to rob Catherine Schilling while she was on her way home from work in June 1981, but when she resisted, he raped her and shot her in the head. Key to the prosecution's case was the testimony of FBI special agent Michael Malone that two pubic hairs found on the woman's body were microscopically identical to a sample taken from Mr. Gates.

What appalled Judge Ugast is that information discrediting Mr. Malone surfaced as early as 1997 but that neither he, as the original sentencing judge, nor the defense was informed. Particularly damning is a Jan. 22, 2004, letter from the Justice Department informing prosecutors that Mr. Malone's lab report in the Gates case was not supported by his notes and advising them to determine whether the defense should be notified, as legally required under Brady v. Maryland. The U.S. attorney's office said it only recently became aware of the letter and is conducting an investigation to determine whether it was actually received and, if so, why it wasn't given to the appropriate officials. A better question is why the government—as a matter of policy—didn't alert the defense to doubts raised in 1997, when the inspector general concluded that Mr. Malone had provided false testimony, or in 2002, when it determined his work was material to Mr. Gates' conviction.

It is scary to think how Mr. Gates' release came about only because of valiant, individual efforts. His court-appointed attorney, Roger Durban, was about to retire but was so bothered by the case he wrote in 2007 to both the judge and the D.C. public defender's office, which took up the case. Their efforts to get new DNA testing would have gone nowhere if not for the work of two D.C. police officers, James Trainum and Grant Greenwalt, in tracking down long-lost evidence from the victim's body in the medical examiner's office. It's also scary to think that while Mr. Gates sat in jail, Ms. Schilling's real killer has gone unpunished.

Mr. Gates still must await another court ruling to be exonerated of the charges. Once that happens, he will be able to make a claim for compensation for time spent in prison. Federal law provides for up to $50,000 per year of incarceration; the District of Columbia leaves the amount up to the court. As much as Mr. Gates gets, it won't be enough.

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Bringing the Taliban back into the fold

By TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may write to her at: Philadelphia Inquirer, P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by e-mail at trubin@phillynews.com.

One of the critical components of President Obama's new Afghan strategy is an effort to persuade large groups of Taliban to change sides.

The U.S. military is already looking for opportunities to motivate mid- and low-level Taliban to lay down arms. The premise: Many Taliban have joined up because of lack of jobs or services, or tribal conflicts. If these grievances are addressed, tribal elders might be willing to stop fighting.

"Reintegration is hugely important, incredibly important," the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, told me in an interview. One of the purposes of the U.S. troop surge is to provide time for such reintegration to happen, since it would seriously weaken overall Taliban momentum.

Yet any effort to flip large numbers of Taliban cannot work without leadership by the Afghan government and without cooperation from Pakistan, where many Afghan Taliban hide.

We'll soon see whether Afghan leadership is forthcoming. Some time in December, Mohammed Masoom Stanikzai, adviser on reintegration to President Hamid Karzai, is due to produce a new program to entice Afghan insurgents to give up the fight. "Now there is a broad consensus within the Afghan government and the international community that military means is not the only solution," Stanikzai told me recently in Kabul. "The key is to have a common position on . . . the parameters of a deal."

However, it's not yet clear whether the Afghan government will join with U.S. and other international officials on serious reintegration efforts. Karzai talks about reconciliation, but a previous Afghan government program was a dismal failure. Money to help insurgents transition back to normal life was misappropriated or stolen. Promises to give returnees jobs were broken.

In the past, Karzai has been suspicious of international efforts to woo Taliban back into society. One year ago, Michael Semple, a European Union official with broad Afghan experience, was arrested and expelled from the country for trying to persuade some Taliban elements in Helmand province to switch sides.

Karzai may now be more open to joint efforts. Stanikzai says he is in contact with Sir Graeme Lamb, the retired British special forces commander who is McChrystal's adviser on reintegration.

Lamb negotiated with insurgents in Northern Ireland and in Iraq. He and U.S. commanders on the ground are exploring similar possibilities in Afghanistan _ offering economic aid and listening to local grievances. But, says Stanikzai, Lamb "agrees that the Afghan government should be in the lead."

Afghan participation is essential to ensure that those who change sides will be protected from retribution by their former Taliban compatriots or by villagers whom they've alienated. Returnees must also be protected against elements within the Afghan intelligence service who still want to kill Pashtun Taliban. "We have to give them guarantees they are safe in their villages," Stanikzai said. "We need reconciliation within the community."

Stanikzai rightly believes that another critical element of reintegration will be Pakistani cooperation across the border. "Otherwise it will be very difficult to generate real momentum here," he said. "Even if some Taliban surrender here, there could be new recruitment in Pakistan."

Yet the Pakistani military is reluctant to move against senior Afghan Taliban based on their soil whom they think may return to power in Kabul. Pakistani officials are more eager for the United States to start talks with top Afghan Taliban leaders, such as Mullah Mohammed Omar.

Stanikzai rejects the idea of talking to big Taliban right now. "If we can take some mid- and lower-level Taliban out of the fighting first (by reintegration), it can reduce the pressure," he said. "If you start from a weak position, why would they (big Taliban) join talks? We have to put real pressure on them to make peace."

After speaking with Stanikzai, one can envision a reintegration strategy that would have impact: an Afghan government program to provide jobs for _ and protect _ Taliban who lay down arms; a U.S. program to identify, and help protect, tribes willing to reintegrate Taliban members; and the use of surge troops to create space and safety to flip numbers of Taliban.

And finally a broader strategy to entice some senior Taliban commanders into political negotiations _ if they break with al-Qaeda and agree to enter the Afghan political system. But the latter piece only works if Pakistan squeezes Taliban leaders on its side of the border.

The first stage in such a virtuous circle requires that a serious Afghan government plan be put forward this month, as promised. Let's see if the Karzai government and Minister Stanikzai produce it on time.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Good will toward men

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." – Luke 2:13-14

In the most quoted verses during Christmas we learn in the Gospel of Luke that angels did not appear to kings, rulers, or people of high earthly esteem to announce the birth of the Christ child. It was the lowly shepherds who were watching their flocks by night that were blessed with a heavenly manifestation to announce His birth. They were exhorted to have good will toward men, prior to their hasty journey to see the newborn.

The condition of "peace on earth" is something that the kings and rulers of countries can establish through law or royal decree. They have the power to stop wars and bloodshed, to call troops home, and negotiate civil interactions between those they rule. However, the moments in world history when peace existed for everyone are rare, and the common condition of man seems to be filled with bloody wars and fighting factions.

True peace will only come when "good will toward men" is more than just a catch phrase at Christmas, but becomes a way of life for everyone. It cannot be decreed from above, but must come from within.

This was demonstrated at one time in history during one of the bloodiest battles of World War I in the winter of 1914. The British were fighting against the Germans on the battlefields of Flanders. Machine guns and gas made it much easier to slaughter en masse, and the muddy "no mans land" between the deep trenches were filled with the wounded and dead from both sides.

The war was in its fourth month as Christmas approached. Hundreds of thousands had already died, and the fighting men were weary and dispirited in the waterlogged trenches and barbed-wire entanglements of Belgium. The soldiers from both sides received gifts and letters, which helped take their minds out of the trenches and think about the good that was still left in the world. The Germans had a direct land link to their home country, so they also received small Christmas trees and candles at the front.

Pope Benedict XV had proposed a cease-fire during Christmas to provide a moment of peace. The Germans readily agreed; however, the British politicians and generals who had the power to stop the fighting denounced a cease-fire as "impossible."

British and German soldiers meeting in No Man's Land during the Christmas Truce of 1914. Picture from the National Army Museum. Source: http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/exhibitions/shortVisits/iconic/page15.shtml

This did not stop the lowly, mud-caked soldiers from initiating their own informal peace accord that embodied the good will toward men spoken by the angels. Stanely Weintraub writes in *Silent Night: The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce*: "the Germans set trees on trench parapets and lit the candles. Then, they began singing carols, and though their language was unfamiliar to their enemies, the tunes were not. After a few trees were shot at, the British became more curious than belligerent and crawled forward to watch and listen. And after a while, they began to sing.

"By Christmas morning, the 'no man's land' between the trenches was filled with fraternizing soldiers, sharing rations and gifts, singing and (more solemnly) burying their dead between the lines. Soon they were even playing soccer, mostly with improvised balls."

Commanders on both sides did not like the friendliness they saw on the battlefield and commanded their troops to resume the shooting under penalty of court martial. The Germans and British were forced to return back into their trenches, and in the words of Pvt. Percy Jones, they parted "with much hand-shaking and mutual goodwill."

The First World War would stretch another three Christmases and claim 8.5 million dead and 21 million wounded before it ended. But for a few precious days, a small part of the war-torn world experienced peace on earth, good will toward men. It did not come from the command of kings, rulers, or generals, but from the humble men who remembered that sacred night when the Prince of Peace was manifest in the flesh.

As wars continue to be commonplace in a world torn apart by differences, let's try to make our home and community a better place by remembering that true peace can only come when we feel good will toward all men and women. Merry Christmas.

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC. They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.

The gift of griping

If there's one thing I dislike more than the rampant commercialization of Christmas, it's everybody complaining about the rampant commercialization of Christmas.

Yes, I realize you may have seen Christmas decorations at your local Walgreens well before Halloween this year. And yes, the cheesy Christmas music playing in Starbucks and my barbershop and everywhere else annoys me too. (Frankly, that Mommy-kissing-Santa-Claus song gives me the creeps.) But please spare me the gauzy romanticization of some pure, precommercial American Christmas past.

Maybe it's because ours is the most untraditional and coldly utilitarian of cultures, but whether we're liberals or conservatives, Americans have this terrible tendency to sentimentalize a lost innocence that never really was. Our constant griping about Christmas is a perfect example.

As much as we like to pretend Christmases past were pure and perfect, the holiday was celebrated in some places and ignored in others until the late 19th century. Before that in the U.S., most businesses and schools remained open, and even Congress routinely convened on Christmas Day. And you know all that nostalgia about old-time New England Christmases? It's claptrap. The Puritans once banned the celebration of Christmas, not only because it lacked biblical foundation but because of all the drinking and adult tomfoolery associated with it.

The modern, nationally celebrated Christmas we know today emerged at a time when Americans were urbanizing, factories were expanding their production and mass consumer culture was being born. While Christians happily went along for the ride, it was these demographic and economic forces—and not a religious movement—that elevated Christmas to its current status, and not coincidentally made the giving of store-bought goods its particular focus.

In his fascinating 1994 study, "The Modern Christmas in America," historian William B. Waits had little to say about religious influences in the making of contemporary Christmas. Why? "The reason is simple," he wrote. "Religion has not played an important role in the emergence of the modern form of the celebration."

This isn't to say that people who celebrate Christmas don't extract spiritual meaning from their holiday traditions. But in addition to that, or regardless of it, the very commercialism that we complain about is the reason for the holiday's vast popularity. And the implicit tension between giving and getting, generosity and consumerism makes Christmas a cultural paradox.

That's why for the last 100 years, plenty of reformers and religious figures have been at war with Christmas writ large. In 1880, the earnest editors of The New York Times condemned the "extravagant" expenditure and "vulgar ostentation" of the celebration. In 1912, the Sunday-School Times magazine worried that "commercialism has come in and Christ has been crowded out. There was no room in the inn for the mother of Jesus when the great birthday came." Does this all sound familiar?

For a century, the widespread fear that consumption was trumping religiosity inspired movements to make Americans think more about social justice and the poor during the holidays. In 1906, the National Consumers' League launched a "Shop Early Campaign" to oppose longer store hours before Christmas for fear that employers and shoppers would spend less time with their loved ones. In 1912, the Society for the Prevention of Useless Giving, or SPUG, fought to end the odd social custom of workers having to buy gifts for their bosses. (Aren't you glad they won?)

For the last four years, a Christian movement called the Advent Conspiracy has encouraged believers to donate money to the needy rather than spend it on lavish gifts. Its four basic tenets are worship fully, spend less, give more and love all.

While I sympathize with these activists, I fear their campaign too will go the way of the Shop Early Campaign. Their passion notwithstanding, they're no match for a $450 billion marketing juggernaut whose seasonal tally helps determine the course of our national economy.

Don't get me wrong; I'd never discourage the purists from raising their questions. After all, contention itself confers importance on an issue in America. And the paradox inherent in modern Christmases is worth grappling with.

The very fact that the battle to save Christmas is joined year in and year out—and has been since we started down the gift-giving, Black Friday, mallification path of excess—seals the deal. If the tension lives, the true meaning of Christmas does too, no matter how deep the tinsel gets. And that ought to give everyone at least a little comfort and joy.

By GREGORY RODRIGUEZ
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Rodriguez, a columnist for the Times' *opinion pages, is director of the California Fellows Program at the New America Foundation. E-mail Rodriguez at grodriguez@latimescolumnists.com*

Letters to the Editor

Here for the students?

I am writing this letter because I am very concerned and disturbed about my education at NMC. What is going on with our instructors at NMC? As a student, I fear that I may not be able to graduate because many of our good instructors' contracts have not been renewed by President Fernandez. We do not have any more full-time science instructors. We had more instructors three years ago than today.

We, students are very sad about what happened last week. The contract of one of your best instructors, Mr. McPhetres, was not renewed by President Fernandez. Why? The class he teaches, CNMI Current Issues, is required for graduation. Will I be able to graduate if no one will be teaching that course in the Spring semester? Maybe President Hernandez will hire someone she likes, but would that teacher have the same or better knowledge about the CNMI and current issues on our islands than Mr. McPhetres?

Are the Board of Regents and President Fernandez really honest with us students when they say, "We are here for the students"?

Nikki DLGuerrero
Garapan, Saipan

Thank you

My family and I would like to extend our profound appreciation during this past few months that has led me to one of the 20 seats (House of Representatives) at the 17th CNMI Legislature. I would like to extend my congratulations to our CNMI Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy Inos on their successful campaign, and to all our elected CNMI senators and representatives, mayors (Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and Northern Islands), municipal councilors and the Board of Education.

I now ask all elected officials that we all work together for the common interest of our CNMI people. Let's set aside our political differences/affiliations and concentrate on all the problems that we are all currently facing. I ask that we all work together and make the CNMI, our people, and our islands be competitive and productive so that our people can come back to our islands from abroad and make the CNMI their home again.

Also, to all our people of the CNMI, most specially the people of Precinct 1, my family and I would like to wish you all a merriest Christmas and a most joyful and prosperous New Year! *Felis Navidad yan Anu Nuevo*! Thank you and may God bless us all.

Joseph Mafnas Palacios
Congressman-Elect, Precinct 1

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84	▼77
Palau	Cloudy	▲86	▼78
Yap	Rain	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲89	▼77
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲86	▼76
Kosrae	Showers	▲87	▼77
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	▲84	▼75

Around The Globe

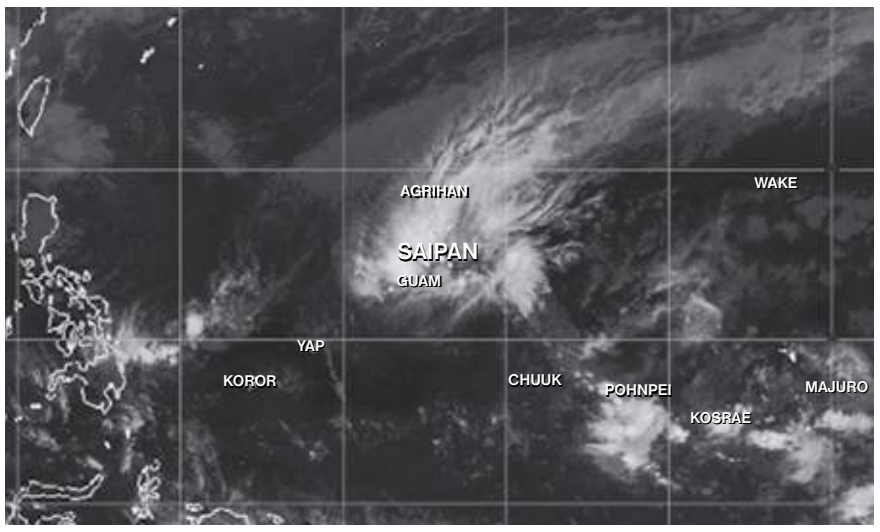
Auckland	Showers	▲72	▼58
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	▲32	▼12
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲74	▼66
Honolulu	Showers	▲76	▼69
London	Rain/Snow	▲39	▼34
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲66	▼44
Manila	Partly Sunny	▲87	▼73
Melbourne	Rain	▲86	▼54
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲80	▼71
New York	Partly Sunny	▲36	▼30
Osaka	Cloudy	▲53	▼37
Paris	Rain/Snow	▲37	▼31
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼35
Rome	Showers	▲62	▼55
Salem	Partly Sunny	▲41	▼26
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲57	▼43
Seoul	Cloudy	▲41	▼25
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲44	▼33
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲34	▼25

Tides

Saipan Harbor

6:12 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.5 Feet
1:06 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
8:01 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2009

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with a weak circulation centered near 12N143E cover an area between 12N and 20N from 142E to 151E. This area includes Guam, Rota, Tinian and Saipan. A shear line extends southwestward from 25N175E across the far Northern Mariana Islands to 18N140E to beyond 130E at 8N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 250 miles northwest of the shear line. A near-equatorial trough stretches east-northeastward from 1N130E to a weak circulation near 3N144E then east-southeastward to another circulation south of Kosrae near 2N164E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found south of Pohnpei between 3N and 6N from 156E to 160E southeast of and including Kosrae between 4N and 5N from 163E to 165E south of Kwajelein between 1N and 5N from 168E to 171E south of Majuro between 4N and 5N from 171E to 173E and near the equator around Butaritari and Tarawa between the equator and 2N from 172E to 176E and between 1N and 2N from 178E to 180.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:40 AM	5:53 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Saturday	6:41 AM	5:54 PM
Sunday	6:41 AM	5:55 PM
Monday	6:41 AM	5:55 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:38 AM	
Friday	12:14 PM	12:06 AM
Saturday	12:52 PM	12:55 AM
Sunday	1:34 PM	1:47 AM
Monday	2:22 PM	2:43 AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 22, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

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The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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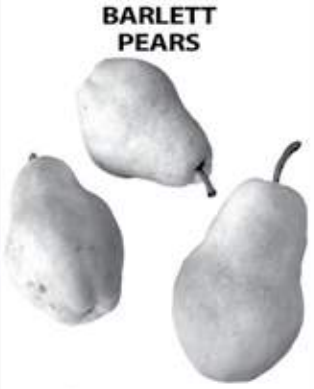

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Business

Holiday stragglers find shortages of hot items

NEW YORK (AP)—Looking for UGG boots? Or what about the last string of holiday lights or inflatable Santas to spruce up the lawn? You might be out of luck.

Some last-minute holiday shoppers are facing disappointment. Stores are running out of key holiday items—and not just Zhu Zhu pets, those robotic hamsters that have been hard to find since before Thanksgiving.

Even sparkly tops, skirts and scarves are running scarce at some stores. Bloomingdale's spokeswoman Anne Keating said that over the past week the upscale department store chain has sold out of practically "anything that sparkles."

Even shoppers who got a head-start faced some hurdles beyond the toy aisles. At Mall of America, the nation's biggest shopping center, an $85 wallet by popular designer Tory Burch that comes in an array of colors—blue, gold and black—was sold out before Thanksgiving. The mall had planned to promote the item in its holiday advertisements, but realized it had sold out, according to Mall of America spokeswoman Bridget Jewell.

It's a switch from last year, when piles of holiday treasures were discounted up to 90 percent as a freefall in spending left merchants swimming in inventory.

But this year, stores cut inventories, willing to take a risk of running out of items rather than having to slash prices. The strategy is expected to boost fourth-quarter profits but may limit sales in the final days and even after Christmas.

Of course, shoppers who have a generic holiday list—a black sweater or a flat-panel TV in any brand—will find plenty to choose from. But slim pickings on key items are frustrating some shoppers, who appear to be delaying purchases more this year than last year.

A week ago, Tom Burson was scouring online toy sites for such items as Lego's City Police Station and an Erector 15 model construction set for his 7-year-old son Willie, but ended up empty handed because they were sold out. The 46-year-old management consultant from Ashburn, Va., said he wound up having to buy the items on eBay and pay up to 35 percent more for the toys.

What surprised Burson was that these toys were not the season's new products and had been around for awhile.

"I learned my lesson," he said. "Thanksgiving can no longer be the start of the shopping season. It's going to have to be Halloween."

"Stores need to have a good selection" for last-minute buyers, said Laura Gurski, partner in the retail practice of A.T. Kearney, a global management consultant. She also wonders how stores will excite shoppers to come back after Christmas if leftovers are skimpy.

Black advocates want more help for the unemployed

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—In the battle against black unemployment, places like the Opportunities Industrialization Center are ground zero.

Savory aromas wafted from a king-size kitchen one recent day as the instructor demonstrated a fish recipe to a dozen aspiring cooks. Nearby, a mock hotel room was waiting to be cleaned. Downstairs, electrical fixtures hung from an exposed wall, ready to be wired.

Here, the goal is "helping people help themselves" through literacy programs and training for hotel, clerical, building, retail and other jobs.

"We have to give people transferable skills," said Robert C. Nelson, president and CEO of the Philadelphia OIC.

There is a growing outcry among black advocates for the Obama administration to target black joblessness with similar training programs and direct job creation.

Black unemployment has climbed from 8.9 percent to 15.6 percent since the recession began in December 2007. In comparison, the nation's overall rate has risen from 4.9 to 10.0 percent. The white rate climbed from 4.4 percent to 9.3 percent.

Although the gap between black and white unemployment has narrowed, there has been a 1.2 percent decline in the black labor force participation rate, more than any other group—which means that fewer blacks are even looking for work. That has held down the black unemployment rate, because such "discouraged workers" are not included in unemployment statistics.

The Congressional Black Caucus recently sent a letter to President Barack Obama asking for $139 billion in unused bank bailout funds to be spent on a long list of training programs and job-creation efforts, including jobs directly created with federal dollars.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Blackberry users struggle with e-mail outage

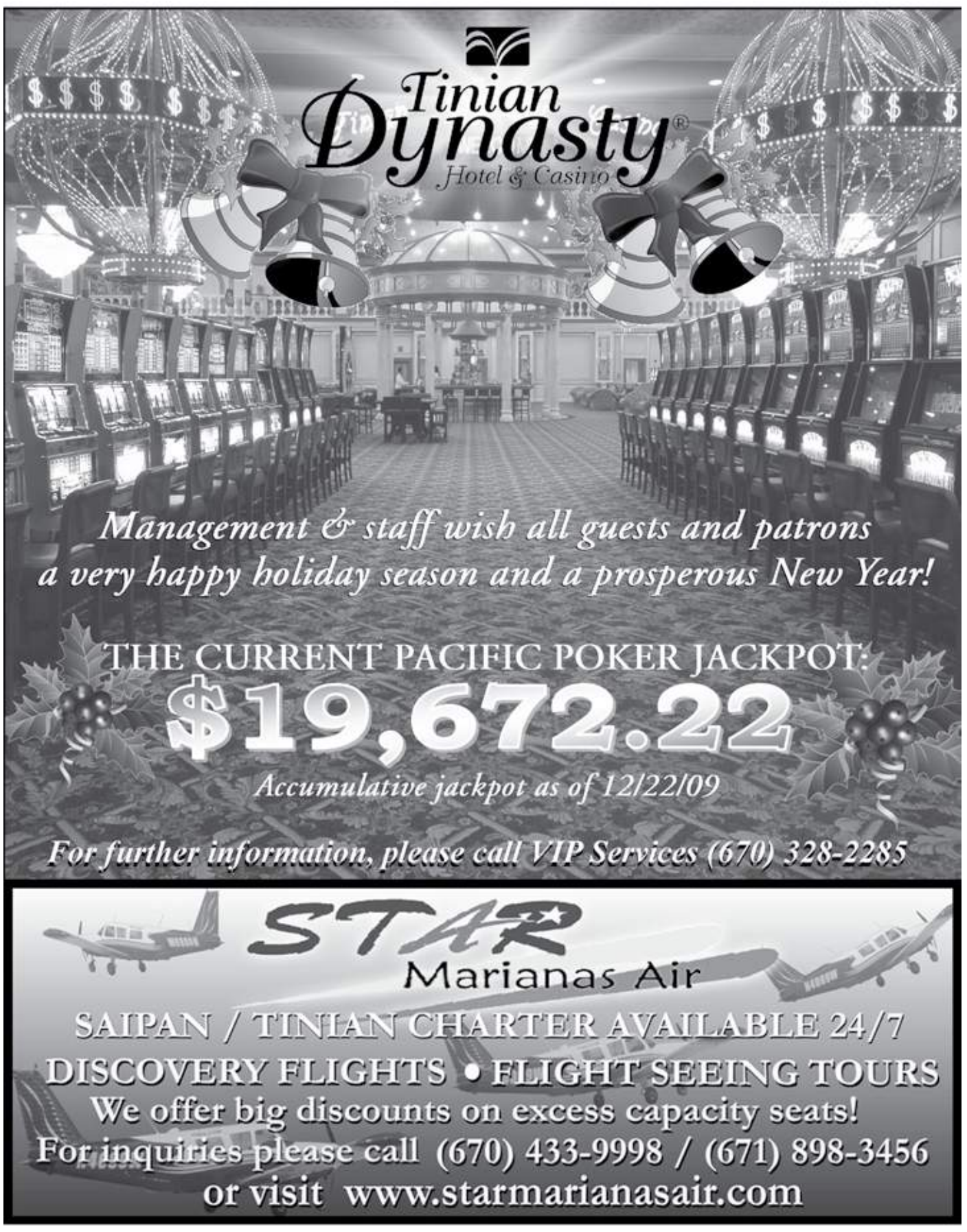
Research In Motion Ltd. said late Tuesday its technicians are working to resolve e-mail messaging delays on its Blackberry smart phones in North and South America. Phone calling and texting services appeared to be functional, but users in the Americas have been unable to send or receive e-mail messages. Would-be users tweeted their frustration on social networking site Twitter. Some said they also could not connect to the Internet. Waterloo, Ontario-based Research in Motion Ltd. said in a statement it apologizes for any inconvenience experienced by customers. ***(AP)***

Court bans sale of Word; Microsoft promises fix

SEATTLE (AP)—A federal appeals court ordered Microsoft Corp. to stop selling its Word program in January and pay a Canadian software company $290 million for violating a patent, upholding the judgment of a lower court. But people looking to buy Word or Microsoft's Office package in the U.S. won't have to go without the software. Microsoft said Tuesday it expects that new versions of the product, with the computer code in question removed, will be ready for sale when the injunction begins on Jan. 11. Toronto-based i4i Inc. sued Microsoft in 2007, saying it owned the technology behind a tool in the popular word processing program. The technology in question gives Word users an improved way to edit XML, or code that tells the program how to interpret and display a document's contents.

Treasury continue to fall on signs of recovery

NEW YORK (AP)—The improving economy propelled long-term interest rates higher for the third straight day on Tuesday, lifting a key bond market barometer to another record. Treasury yields rose as their prices slumped in response to news that sales of existing homes surged last month. The report from the National Association of Realtors gave investors another incentive to keep buying riskier assets including stocks, and less reason to hold on to defensive investments like government debt. The yield curve, the market measure that reflects the difference between the yields on two-year and 10-year Treasurys, widened further as investors sold longer-term bonds. Investors have been selling long-dated bonds in anticipation that a healthier economy will bring higher inflation, which undermines the value of fixed-income securities.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Nation

Dems, White House predict success on health care

WASHINGTON (AP)—From the White House to Capitol Hill, Democrats on Tuesday confidently predicted Senate passage of President Barack Obama's health care overhaul after the bill cleared its second 60-vote test and the time was set for a final tally.

Reid

Coming to the Senate floor in the middle of the afternoon, Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., announced an agreement to vote on final passage at 8 a.m. Thursday, Christmas Eve. It would mark the 25th consecutive day of Senate debate on health care.

"The finish line is in sight," Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., said at a news conference with other Senate leaders and cheering supporters. "We're not the first to attempt such reforms but we will be the first to succeed."

At the White House, spokesman Robert Gibbs declared: "Health care reform is not a matter of if. Health care reform is now a matter of when."

Obama said the Senate legislation accomplishes 95 percent of what he wanted on health care. "Every single criteria for reform I put forward is in this bill," the president said in an interview with The Washington Post.

Senate Democrats remained behind their compromise bill over steadfast Republican opposition. A motion to shut off debate and move to a vote on a package of changes by Reid passed 60-39.

The final 60-vote hurdle, limiting debate on the bill itself, is expected to be cleared Wednesday afternoon, setting up the Thursday morning-before-Christmas vote on the legislation, which at that point will need only a simple majority to pass.

Holiday storm could snarl travel in West, Midwest

DENVER (AP)—Holiday travelers scrambled to adjust their plans Tuesday as a fast-moving snowstorm threatened to bring long delays along with a white Christmas for millions of people throughout the West and Midwest.

The storm system was already snarling traffic in Arizona on Tuesday, with blizzard-like conditions closing roads and causing a pileup involving 20 vehicles. South of Phoenix, a dust storm set off a series of collisions that killed at least three people.

The blustery weather in Arizona is part of a storm system that promised to bring more than a foot of snow in parts of Colorado and southern Utah by midday Wednesday. Blizzard warnings were likely on Christmas Eve in Kansas and other Plains states as the storm moves east.

South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds declared a state of emergency Tuesday, giving his state more flexibility to prepare for blizzard-like conditions expected Wednesday.

NYC victim's mom: EMTs were 'inhuman' not to help

NEW YORK (AP)—Two EMTs on a coffee break who failed to help a dying pregnant woman acted "to the best of their abilities," their lawyer said Tuesday, while the woman's mother condemned them as "inhuman."

The EMTs, Jason Green and Melissa Jackson, were suspended without pay and the Brooklyn district attorney opened a criminal investigation into the case. State health officials, who called the inaction "appalling," were also investigating along with the city's fire department, which oversees EMTs.

The two emergency workers were at the eatery when Eutisha Rennix, an employee, collapsed. Witnesses have said the EMTs told workers to call 911, then left when they were asked to help the woman, a mother of a 3-year-old son who was expecting her second child.

Cynthia Rennix, the 25-year-old woman's mother said, the EMTs shouldn't have taken those jobs if they weren't willing to get involved in emergency situations.

"You are very inhuman; you don't need to have a job like you do," she said.

ACROSS THE NATION

No longer coy, Giuliani won't run for NY office

NEW YORK (AP)—After months of playing it coy and flirting with a bid for statewide office, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani said Tuesday that he won't return to the campaign trail next year, leaving a wide-open field for New York Republicans interested in the gubernatorial and Senate races. Giuliani, viewed by many New York Republicans as a savior for the struggling party, said his "significant commitments" to his lucrative law and consulting businesses made it impossible for him to run for office in 2010. At a news conference to endorse ex-congressman Rick Lazio for governor, Giuliani said he had considered running against incumbent Democrat Gov. David Paterson and in the U.S. Senate race next year against freshman Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand.

Oldest captive gorilla turns 53 at Ohio zoo

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—At an Ohio zoo, a noteworthy senior citizen has turned another year older. The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium on Tuesday celebrated the 53rd birthday of Colo. The International Species Information System says she was the first western lowland gorilla born in a zoo and is now the oldest gorilla in captivity. Keepers had a birthday cake for her and treats for the zoo's gorilla family. Colo has lived at the Columbus Zoo since her birth on Dec. 22, 1956, when she weighed in at 3 pounds, 5 ounces. Her name was chosen in a contest and is short for Columbus, Ohio.

Man with 5-inch knife stuck in chest orders coffee

WARREN, Mich. (AP)—A 52-year-old man complained only about the cold weather before walking into a diner with a five-inch knife sticking out of his chest. The unnamed man called a Warren 911 operator on Sunday night to ask that an ambulance be sent to Bray's, an eatery in neighboring Hazel Park. He said he had been stabbed during a robbery attempt half a mile away, then walked to the restaurant and called 911 from a pay phone. On a recording of the call, the man gives a vague description of his attacker before saying, "I'm gonna sit down at Bray's 'cause they got a chair and it's cold out here." Restaurant employee George Mirdita told The Detroit News the man calmly ordered coffee. Police said Tuesday that the man is recovering.

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World

Ahmadinejad dismisses US deadline for nuclear deal

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's president on Tuesday dismissed a year-end deadline set by the Obama administration and the West for Tehran to accept a U.N.-drafted deal to swap enriched uranium for nuclear fuel. The United States warned Iran to take the deadline seriously.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also accused the U.S. of fabricating a purported Iranian secret document that appears to lay out a plan for developing a critical component of an atomic bomb.

Ahmadinejad's remarks underscored Tehran's defiance in the nuclear standoff—and also sought to send a message that his government has not been weakened by the protest movement sparked by June's disputed presidential election. He spoke a day after the latest opposition protest by tens of thousands mourning a dissident cleric who died over the weekend.

Ahmadinejad

Late Tuesday, the Web site of state-run television said Ahmadinejad had appointed a new chief of Iran's prestigious Art Academy, removing opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi from the post.

Mousavi, a presidential challenger who alleged voting fraud, had attended Monday's funeral procession. There was no immediate comment from Mousavi.

President Barack Obama has set a rough deadline of the end of this year for Iran to respond to an offer of dialogue on the nuclear issue. Washington and its allies are warning of new, tougher sanctions on Iran if it doesn't respond.

The U.N.-proposed deal is the centerpiece of the West's diplomatic effort. Under the deal, Tehran would ship most of its stockpile of low-enriched uranium abroad to be processed into fuel rods, which would ease the West's fears that the material could be used to produce a nuclear weapon.

Iran, which denies it seeks to build a bomb, has balked at the deal's terms.

The international community can give Iran "as many deadlines as they want, we don't care," Ahmadinejad said in a speech to thousands of supporters in the southern city of Shiraz.

Ahmadinejad dismissed the threat of sanctions, saying Iran wants talks "under just conditions where there is mutual respect."

"We told you that we are not afraid of sanctions against us, and we are not intimidated," he said, addressing the West. "If Iran wanted to make a bomb, we would be brave enough to tell you."

As the crowd cheered: "We love you, Ahmadinejad," the Iranian leader lashed out at Washington, vowing Iran will stand up against U.S. attempts to "dominate the Middle East."

The U.S. responded sternly. "It is a very real deadline for the international community," said White House press secretary Robert Gibbs.

In Washington, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said the international community was "united in its resolve that Iran must either answer the questions that we have about its nuclear aspirations or face additional pressure."

Brazil: Boy ordered returned to US dad's custody

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—Brazil's chief justice ruled in favor of a U.S. man who has waged a five-year legal battle for his son, ordering Brazilian relatives on Tuesday to turn over the 9-year-old boy.

The decision put David Goldman one step closer to finally being reunited with his son, Sean, and appeared to bring the case in line with international custody accords.

The boy was taken by Goldman's now-deceased ex-wife to her native Brazil in 2004, where he has remained. Goldman, of Tinton Falls, New Jersey, has been fighting to get him back from the boy's stepfather.

Both the U.S. and Brazilian governments have said the matter clearly fell under the Hague Convention, which seeks to ensure that custody decisions are made by the courts in the country where a child originally lived—in this case, the United States.

Goldman's New Jersey-based lawyer, Patricia Apy, said Tuesday that she believed the order by Supreme Court Chief Justice Gilmar Mendes required Sean to be handed over immediately, but she said Goldman's attorneys had not heard from lawyers for the Brazilian family.

Hong Kong democracy activists take a gamble

HONG KONG (AP)—Frustrated by an indifferent public, some of Hong Kong's democracy activists are preparing to take a political risk.

Two pro-democracy parties say five of their members will resign from the legislature next month to force special elections for their seats. They hope to turn the vote into a referendum on their cause and put fresh pressure on Beijing to allow electoral reform. But it could backfire: Given the current public mood, they well could lose.

Their gamble highlights how China, after a few early stumbles, has seized the upper hand in the debate about the territory's political future.

Hong Kong, a British colony for 150 years, was returned to China in 1997. The territory of 7 million people is semiautonomous, but only half its legislature is elected, with the remainder appointed by business and other interest groups. Its leader, or chief executive, is chosen by an 800-member committee controlled by Beijing.

WORLD BRIEFS

Abducted Colombian state governor found dead

BOGOTA (AP)—The governor of a southern Colombian state was found dead Tuesday less than 24 hours after being abducted by leftist rebels, a top state security official and the victim's wife said. It was the first kidnapping of a major Colombian politician since 2002. The body of Gov. Luis Francisco Cuellar of Caqueta state was found not far from Florencia, the state capital where the 69-year-old was kidnapped late Monday, security official Edilberto Ramon Endo told The Associated Press. Cuellar's wife, Himeldo Galindo, also confirmed the death to the AP, but was too distraught to offer details. Endo refused to say more pending news conferences by senior government officials.

Japan's emperor celebrates 76th birthday

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's emperor greeted thousands of well-wishers on his 76th birthday Wednesday, expressing hopes for brighter days ahead as the nation struggles to shake off its worst recession since World War II. Although the world's second biggest economy is technically growing, a vicious cycle of falling wages, spending and prices threatens to derail its future. "The severe economic conditions have led to many difficulties," Akihito said from a balcony at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. "There seem to be many people who are struggling. I hope the coming year will be even a little better." He made three such appearances during the day Wednesday, accompanied by Empress Michiko, Crown Prince Naruhito, Prince Akishino and their wives. Akihito assured the flag-waving crowds that his health had gradually improved. Last year, the emperor marked his 75th birthday after a series of illnesses including prostate cancer, an irregular pulse and internal bleeding.

Plane overshoots Jamaica runway; no injury reports

MIAMI (AP)—An American Airlines spokesman says a flight from Miami overshot the runway in Kingston, Jamaica, but came to a safe stop. He says there are no immediate reports of injuries or fatalities. Charley Wilson says all passengers are off Flight 331. It took off from Miami International Airport Tuesday at 8:52 p.m. and was scheduled to arrive at Norman Manley International Airport at 10:27 p.m. Wilson says it was almost a full flight. He says normally a flight carries 140 passengers plus the crew.

Slaying of drug war hero's family shocks Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Assailants on Tuesday gunned down the mother, aunt and siblings of a marine killed in a raid that took out one of Mexico's most powerful cartel leaders—sending a chilling message to troops battling the drug war: You go after us, we wipe out your families. The brazen pre-dawn slayings came just hours after the navy honored Melquisedet Angulo as a national hero at a memorial service. "The message is very clear: It's to intimidate not only the government but its flesh and blood," said Jorge Chabat, a Mexican expert on drug cartels. "It's to intimidate those in the armed forces so they fear not only for their own lives, but the lives of their families."

Dear People of the CNMI,

I would like to extend my deepest and sincerest appreciation for all your support and for your vote of confidence in this past election. I am forever grateful for the trust that you have instilled in me to represent YOU, the people of the CNMI, and most especially the people of Precinct III. I now look forward to working for you and with you as we continue to work through the challenges that we are facing. I wish all of you a happy, blessed, and safe holiday season. Once again, THANK YOU, from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerest Regards,

Edmund S. Villagomez

ROTA CASINO GAMING COMMISSION (RCGC)
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. Box 1547 ROTA, MP 96951

PURSUANT TO THE OPEN GOVERNMENT ACT, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION, DIEGO M. SONGAO HEREBY ANNOUNCES THAT THE ROTA CASINO GAMING COMMISSION'S REGULAR MEETING FOR MONDAY, 28 DECEMBER 2009.

DATE: **Monday, 28 December 2009**
TIME: **2:00 PM**
LOCATION: **Rota Casino Gaming Commission's Office**
Tatachog, Rota, MP 96951

AGENDA

I. **Call to Order**
II. **Roll Call**
III. **Adoption of Agenda**
IV. **Adoption of Minutes**
V. **Chairman's Report**

VI. **Old Business**
-Application of RTIC
-Application for Temporary Casino License
-Employment Application for RCGC Staff
-RCGC Loan

VII. **New Business**
VIII. **Miscellaneous**
IX. **Adjournment**

*At anytime during the meeting, the Commission may move to Executive Session.

/s/ DIEGO M. SONGAO 23, December 2009
Chairman

Environment

Jury still out on Christmas tree environmental friendliness

By JERRY HIRSCH and MARTIN ZIMMERMAN
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES TIMES
Nasir Mia, right, helps a customer with a Christmas tree at a lot in the Sherman Oaks community of Los Angeles. Some environmentalists say live-cut trees have smaller carbon footprints.

Artificial or fresh-cut live trees? That may be a dilemma this year for environment-minded shoppers seeking a green Christmas.

Tree sellers have made dueling pitches this season, each extolling the environmental benefits of their trees, and the choice may be a puzzler. Some shoppers are ignoring both, going instead for living trees in pots.

Many factors go into a Christmas tree purchase, including family tradition, price and ease of care. But increasingly, environmental concerns are also part of the equation.

The green pitches this year come at time when trees sales of all types are being battered by a tough national economy. ISI Group, a New York research company, notes that sales are up slightly over last year, but the gains have shrunk each week since Thanksgiving.

The American Christmas Tree Association.—the trade group for the artificial manufacturers—says a study it sponsored shows that its trees have a smaller carbon foot print than live trees cut for the holidays.

That's based on the assumption that these artificial trees are kept in use for at least 10 years. However, the Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association—the live-cut tree guys—note that "real" Christmas trees reduce carbon emissions by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen as they grow, and that they are renewable. Growers plant one or more trees to replace every tree they harvest.

Mike Bondi, a professor of forestry at Oregon State University, said that there haven't been any lifecycle analysis studies in the United States that compare carbon footprints, or greenhouse gas emissions, of real versus artificial Christmas trees.

Bondi said that there is one study that looked at the amount of carbon fixed within live trees throughout its life cycle, but the findings are still preliminary at this point and it did not measure or compare carbon emissions from real and artificial trees.

The average tree absorbs about 20 pounds of carbon, but that doesn't address the issue of how much carbon is used to farm the tree, ship it to a retailer and to dispose it after the holiday, Bondi said.

Bondi, who has 7-foot noble fir tree in his home this Christmas, discounted the findings of the artificial tree study.

"The study by the American Christmas Tree Association is not a peer-reviewed scientific study. We tried to get our hands on the data and they wouldn't share the information," Bondi said.

The trade group's study was conducted by PE Americas, an environmental consulting company, and was also "preliminary," said Jami Warner, executive director of the Los Angeles-based American Christmas Tree Association.

She said the group plan to release the details of a more comprehensive study by next Christmas.

The Carbon Trust, an independent company set up by British government to accelerate that nation's move to a low-carbon economy, recommends that people purchase real trees. "Typically, they have much lower carbon footprints than artificial Christmas trees," the trust said.

But, the British group pointed out in a statement, artificial trees become more environmentally friendly after they have been reused for at least 11 years. That's because the amount of carbon emissions from making and selling one artificial tree equals about what's created from growing and cutting 11 real trees, according to the group's estimates.

Real trees have the smallest carbon footprint when they are chipped and used in a garden after the holiday is over rather than being shipped off to a landfill, the trust said.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association, which represent growers, 28.2 million real trees were sold last year compared with 11.7 million artificial trees.

Real trees tend to be less expensive. On Home Depot's Web site, a 7-foot fresh cut Fraser fir costs $129, and a 5-footer is $100. But real trees can make people's allergies flare and sometimes create a mess when the needles start to drop off.

Although artificial trees sell for different prices—Home Depot has one for $129—a high-quality tree that is realistic and likely to last for years will sell for $300 or more, according to manufacturers.

US expert: 'Too late' to save northern white rhino

OL PEJETA CONSERVANCY, Kenya (AP) — A 38-year-old northern white rhino born in south Sudan ate African grasses for the first time in three decades Monday, the first full day on the continent for the world's last four northern white rhinos capable of breeding.

The rhinos' handlers and park officials hope the rhinos will bear young in their natural habitat and save their subspecies. But the four haven't reproduced in years, and a U.S. rhino expert said he believes the effort is futile — suggesting that the northern white rhino is already effectively extinct.

The four rhinos landed in Kenya on Sunday after flying in from a zoo in the Czech Republic. They were transported in wooden crates that read "Last Chance to Survive." Only eight northern whites are believed to remain.

"It makes no sense to move them at this point in time. It's way too little, too late," said Randy Rieches, curator of mammals for the San Diego Wild Animal Park, which has two northern whites. "That's based on a lot of knowledge, a lot of husbandry and certainly a lot of reproductive background."

As plans were made to move the rhinos, Rieches said he shared his opinions with officials at the Dvur Kralove Zoo and Kenya's Ol Pejeta Conservancy, the game park where the four rhinos now reside.

The northern white rhino is the most highly endangered mega-vertebrate on earth. Risking the few that are left, even though they are not reproducing, while taking funding from other endangered rhinos was a bad idea, said Rieches, who sits on the board of the International Rhino Foundation.

Rhino handlers and park officials in Kenya dismissed Rieches' view, saying that even if chances of success are low, they have to try.

"I'd say of course there's a chance. What was the option? That they stay in the zoo and not breed?" said Berry White, a woman known as the "rhino whisperer" who helped prep the mammals for their move. "Yes, of course a lot of money was spent (moving the rhinos), but people wanted to spend money on this project."

White said female rhinos can breed until they are 30. The two females moved to Kenya are 9 and 20 years old. Animal experts say the northern whites haven't bred in zoos because they form sibling relationships with the opposite sex.

"The girls have a lot of years left in them. One has bred already. Yes, some people would say it's a longshot but not necessarily. ... Let's hope in the next five years there's one or two calves, some buildup," White said.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
PSS RFP 09-039

"Development of a Defensive Driving Training Program for the Public School System"

The CNMI Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for the **"Development of a Defensive Driving Training Program which will include the Training of 34 Bus Drivers, Development of a Curriculum, and the Identification and Training of at Least 5 Trainers".** The Scope of Work and Proposal Package is available beginning December 18, 2009 at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, CNMI or by E-mail request to delacruzr@pss.cnmi.mp.

There will be a Pre-Proposal Meeting for Interested Proposers on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at 9:30 A.M. in the 3rd Floor Conference room in the NMI Retirement Fund Building. Arrangements can be made to accommodate off-island Proposers via Video Conferencing participation. Questions may be faxed to Peter Le'au, Associate Commissioner for Administration at 670.664.3791 or e-mailed to leaupi@gmail.com **no later than January 11, 2009.**

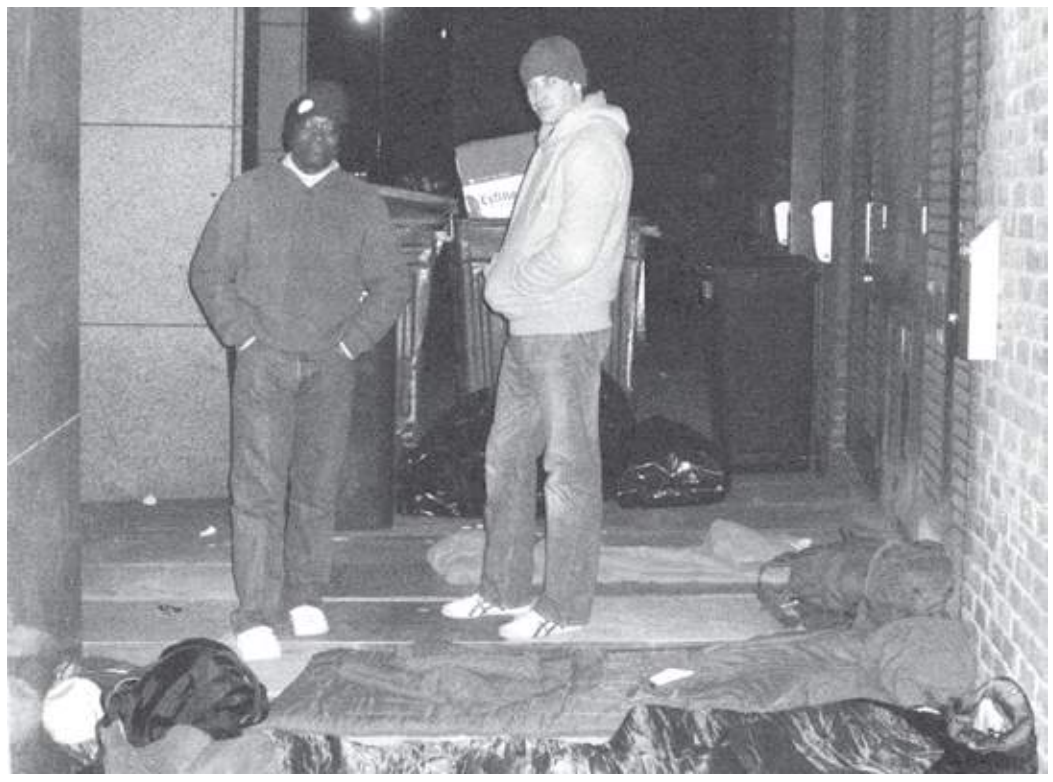
Proposals shall be in a sealed envelope marked "PSS RFP 09-039" containing (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office **no later than January 15, 2010 at 10:00 A.M. Saipan Time (Chamorro Standard Time)** E-mail submission may be directed to delacruzr@pss.cnmi.mp. Any proposal submitted after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Si Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

Si Robert Florian
P&S Officer

Life & Style

By JENNIFER QUINN
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER



AP

In this image made available by the Charity Centrepoint in London, Tuesday Dec. 22, 2009, Britain's Prince William and Centrepoint CEO Seyi Obakin prepare for a night sleeping rough in freezing temperatures in central London, Tuesday Dec. 15, 2009.

Prince William spends a night on London streets

LONDON (AP)—A cold alley in central London is a far cry from a palace—but it was the spot Prince William chose to sleep to highlight the plight of homeless British teenagers.

He spent a chilly night near Blackfriars Bridge last week with Seyi Obakin, the chief executive of British homeless charity Centrepoint. William has been the charity's patron since 2005.

"I cannot, after one night, even begin to imagine what it must be like to sleep rough on London's streets night after night," William said Tuesday. "Poverty, mental illness, drug and alcohol dependancy and family breakdown cause people to become and then stay homeless.

"I hope that by deepening my understanding of the issue, I can help do my bit to help the most vulnerable on our streets."

William, second in line to the throne, was exposed to some of the hardships found on London's streets when his mother, Princess Diana, took him to a shelter in 1996. Just 13 at the time, William spent an hour at the facility with his younger brother, Harry.

Diana was well-known for her charitable work and the homeless was a group she was particularly close to. She had also served as Centrepoint's patron, a position she held at the time of her death in 1997.

A photograph released by the charity shows William, 27, in the alley in jeans, a gray hooded sweat shirt and a knit hat pulled low.

In a post to the charity's Web site, Obakin said the idea for William to spend a night on the streets—known as "sleeping rough" in Britain—was hatched in March.

"He was determined, as he has always been, to understand deeply the full range of problems a homeless young person might face," Obakin said. "For me, it was a scary experience. Out of my comfortable bed. Out there in the elements. Out there on an extremely cold night, with temperatures down to -4 C (24.8 F). And it was the same for Prince William. But he was determined to do it."

Obakin said they found a secluded spot—tucked away behind some garbage bins—and settled in for a restless night.

"But there was no shielding from the bitter cold, or the hard concrete floor, or the fear of being accosted by drug dealers, pimps or those out to give homeless people a 'good' kicking," Obakin said.

William is currently training to be a Royal Air Force search-and-rescue pilot.

Terrorist attack feared after Jackson's arrest

NEW YORK (AP)—Police concerns that media-hungry terrorists would attack Michael Jackson's trial as a "soft target" led to a request for federal help, according to FBI files kept on the late pop star. The documents also show that the FBI helped facilitate interviews in the Philippines by California authorities investigating Jackson over allegations that he had sexually abused boys.

The FBI monitored Jackson for more than a decade, but the files contain no major revelations about his private life and the bureau apparently never developed any solid evidence against him.

AP

In this April 30, 2004 file photo Michael Jackson, surrounded by security and with his brother, Randy, rear left, arrives for his expected arraignment on child molestation charges at the Santa Maria, Calif., courthouse.

In 2004, the Santa Maria Police Department in California asked for FBI "involvement" after Jackson was arrested for child molestation. Police, according to the FBI, said they believed the court case would be a "soft target" for terrorism because of the "worldwide media coverage" the trial would attract.

The FBI concluded there were no threats, but did note the presence in an early court appearance of "The Nation of Islam, represented by its security unit Fruits of Islam," and of a New Black Panther Party member whose name was left blank in the files. Jackson used Nation of Islam bodyguards during the legal proceedings.

Back in September 1993, an investigator from the Los Angeles Police Department and another from the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office arrived in Manila to speak to two former employees of Jackson's Neverland ranch who claimed they saw the singer fondle young boys.

Their trip came after the LAPD had asked the FBI if it wanted to work a possible case against Jackson for transporting a minor across state lines for immoral purposes. The FBI checked with the U.S. Attorney's Office, which declined.

The files say an FBI agent accompanied the California officials to the first interview to make sure there were no problems.

SC priest wins $100,000 for church in poker game

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—A South Carolina priest missed the $1 million top prize in a poker tournament to be televised this weekend but he won $100,000 for his church and he hopes his participation gives viewers a "fun twist" on their perceptions of the priesthood.

The Rev. Andrew Trapp said he entered the PokerStars.net Million Dollar Challenge in hopes of putting St. Michael Catholic Church "super close" to its $5.5 million fundraising goal to build a new facility. He also wanted to strike a public relations blow for priests.

"At the very least, even if I didn't win any prize money, I was hoping it would help people to see that priests can have fun and be normal people and hopefully get a little bit of a fun twist on the image of the priesthood," the assistant pastor said Tuesday. The top prize went to retired New York Police detective Mike Kosowski. But Trapp won $100,000, untaxed, in a semi-final round in October for the coastal church's building fund, which has amassed $4 million after four years of fundraising.

For the final episode, a camera crew filmed a Sunday Mass at the church, about 10 miles southwest of Myrtle Beach, and taped Trapp talking about the need for a new building.

"It's really old. It's too small for our needs, and it's really vulnerable if a hurricane comes," he says in a segment on PokerStars.net.

He adds, "God gave me a gift of playing cards—that interest, that hobby—and I could put it to use to help build our church. That just was really exciting for me."

Congregants will gather Sunday afternoon at the church to watch the final televised round.

The 28-year-old Aiken native said he started playing poker in middle school at family gatherings. But it was in seminary in Columbus, Ohio, that he learned Texas Hold 'Em.

"We just played for fun," he said. "It was just a way to hang out with each other and to enjoy each other's company."

Vatican paper says 'The Simpsons' are okely dokely

VATICAN CITY (AP)—To put it as the devout Ned Flanders would, the Vatican's newspaper thinks "The Simpsons" are an okely dokely bunch.

L'Osservatore Romano on Tuesday congratulated the show on its 20th anniversary, praising its philosophical leanings as well as its stinging and often irreverent take on religion.

Without Homer Simpson and the other yellow-skinned characters "many today wouldn't know how to laugh," said the article titled "Aristotle's Virtues and Homer's Doughnut."

The paper credited "The Simpsons" — the longest-running American animated program — with opening up cartoons to an adult audience.

The show is based on "realistic and intelligent writing," it said, though it added there was some reason to criticize its "excessively crude language, the violence of certain episodes or some extreme choices by the scriptwriters."

Religion, from the snore-evoking sermons of the Rev. Lovejoy to Homer's face-to-face talks with God, appears so frequently on the show that it could be possible to come up with a "Simpsonian theology," it said.

Homer's religious confusion and ignorance are "a mirror of the indifference and the need that modern man feels toward faith," the paper said.

It commented on several religion-themed episodes, including one in which Homer calls for divine intervention by crying: "I'm not normally a religious man, but if you're up there, save me, Superman!"

"Homer finds in God his last refuge, even though he sometimes gets His name sensationally wrong," L'Osservatore said. "But these are just minor mistakes, after all, the two know each other well."

NY court snubs Star Trek fan's memorabilia lawsuit

NEW YORK (AP)—A "Star Trek" fan isn't entitled to millions of dollars in damages for buying memorabilia that he says wasn't as out-of-this-world as it seemed, a court said Tuesday.

Ted Moustakis wasn't promised he was getting a one-of-a-kind plum when he paid $11,400 for a uniform for "Star Trek: The Next Generation" character Data at a 2006 auction, an appeals court said.

The court also said Moustakis is due at most a refund for two other purchases he says were fakes: a $6,000 poker visor supposedly worn by Data and a $6,600 table from the show's set.

Auction house Christie's and CBS Consumer Products, which oversees "Star Trek" merchandise, praised the ruling. Moustakis' lawyer didn't immediately return a telephone call.

The longtime Trekkie from Towaco, N.J., has said he was thrilled to get the items—until he showed the visor to the actor who played the android Data, Brent Spiner, at a 2007 fan convention.

Spiner told him the visor wasn't genuine, according to Moustakis' lawsuit. Moustakis said he later found the table also was inauthentic, and the uniform was one of several made for the program. Christie's had led him to believe it was unique, he said.

The state Supreme Court's Appellate Division said the auction catalog didn't represent the costume as one-of-a-kind, and even if the other items weren't as advertised, Moustakis isn't entitled to "the massive recovery he now demands" in his $7 million lawsuit.

Christie's has said it stood behind the authenticity of the auction, tied to the hit show's 40th anniversary.

"The sale was and remains a fantastic highlight in the memorabilia market," Christie's lawyer Sandra L. Cobden said Tuesday.

Usher is slowly building a lifestyle brand

NEW YORK (AP)—Usher knows his stuff when it comes to fashion.

The R&B singer describes his style as "flashy classy" and he is known for seamlessly moving between three-piece banker suits and leather jackets. He admires edgier designers such as Rick Owens, Marc Jacobs and Kris Van Assche.

Usher has enough business savvy to say it's not the right time for him to launch his own label, but he is in New York to promote his new fragrance, Usher VIP, a follow-up to Usher He, which ranked in the top 40 of men's prestige fragrance sales this year, according to market data researcher NPD.

This is all moonlighting for him, though. Musically, Usher had the No. 3 hip-hop song according to Nielsen/BDS with "Papers."

On this day Usher is in a luxurious hotel suite wearing a long blue cardigan sweater, dark jeans and black leather boots to answer fashion questions from The Associated Press:

AP: What's the most important element of your look?

Usher: It's about how you feel, not about `fashion.' It's about healthy living, the combination of foods you eat. ... Those ancillaries are what lead you to `fashion.' Fashion can be a beautiful scarf, soft cashmere sweater or cool boots.

AP: Where do you find inspiration for your style?

Usher: My taste develops the more I'm introduced to things, the more I travel and experience different lifestyles. I always go out and embrace where I am—I don't stay locked up in a hotel room. I am an eclectic spectator.

AP: Why isn't there an Usher fashion label yet?

Usher: I'm building a lifestyle brand and I'm not rushing to do clothes. I feel like I'm speaking to my customer now with the fragrances, and, in this economy and with my style and attention to detail, my clothes won't come cheap. It's not the right time.

AP: What did you wear when you sang at President Obama's holiday concert earlier this month?

Usher: I worked with the president's tailor. I wanted an edge but be appropriate and I wanted to be warm. The scarf I wore was attached to the jacket, which was cashmere and had waxed silver thread. I wore a slim pant that was dressy and well tailored—and I'm in good shape now so I didn't mind showing off a little. I wore black boots that were like spats with French buttons by Dsquared2. ... It was all new for the president.

AP: What's with the beard?

Usher: It keeps me warm.

This photo taken May 14, 2008 shows singer Usher posing for photographs in his dressing room before appearing on the "Ellen DeGeneres Show" to promote his album "Here I Stand" at NBC studios in Burbank, Calif.

AP

Rage Against the Machine humbles Simon Cowell

LONDON (AP)—A grassroots Facebook campaign has spoiled American Idol mogul Simon Cowell's Christmas by denying one of his new acts the prestigious Christmas No. 1 spot in Britain.

Thanks to a Facebook campaign that capitalized on growing unhappiness with Cowell's cookie-cutter approach to pop stardom, the antiestablishment Rage Against the Machine came out ahead of Joe McElderry, winner of Cowell's popular "X Factor" TV competition.

The upset for the heavily favored McElderry represents a setback for Cowell, who has made millions on both sides of the Atlantic for his roles in "American Idol," "X Factor," "Britain's Got Talent" and other productions.

Rage Against the Machine finished first with a surge of support for their 1992 hit "Killing in the Name," which became the first Christmas No. 1 in Britain supported only by downloads.

The Facebook campaign was organized by an English couple Jon and Tracy Morter in a concerted effort to break Cowell's recent stranglehold on the holiday No. 1 song, a traditional source of status and bragging rights inside Britain.

"Rage Against the Machine was built for moments like this," the band's guitarist Tom Morello told The Associated Press. "We are honored to have the song that liberated the U.K. pop chart."

"Killing In The Name" surged in the last days of the competition to sell more than 500,000 copies in the past week, compared with sales of 450,000 for McElderry's single. It also set a record for most downloads in a single week. Morello said the band would donate the profits to the British homeless charity Shelter.

McElderry, a talented, baby-faced singer who is just 18, was gracious in defeat. He emphasized his satisfaction at winning last week's X Factor finals, which shot him from obscurity to national prominence.

AP

In this March 20, 2008 file photo, Simon Cowell attends the Details magazine Party in Beverly Hills, Calif.

"Fair play to the guys who have organized the Facebook campaign—it's been exciting to be part of a much-hyped battle and they definitely deserve congratulations," he said.

McElderry said he was "delighted" to have his debut single—The Climb—in the charts. The CD is prominently displayed in hundreds of British shops.

"It's been such an incredible couple of months, and I got the best Christmas gift I could ever have asked for in winning The X Factor," he said.

The Facebook campaign on behalf of Rage Against the Machine attracted nearly 1 million followers on Facebook, many of whom were exasperated with the way the winner of the X-Factor has dominated music charts in the run up to Christmas.

Morello said the campaign had delivered "a crushing defeat for bland pop music."

"There are other ways to make music than to stand in front of a panel and perform like a circus bear," Morello added. "Free expression, uncompromising content are sitting on top of the U.K. pop chart this week."

IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE

Rosa Manglona Atalig Camacho

lovingly known as "Chai"

Born on May 28, 1939
Was called to Her eternal rest on Monday, December 21, 2009

In Her new life, she now joins Her:

Parents: †Serafin Mendiola Atalig & †Rosario Sablan Manglona Atalig
Parents-in-law: †Sebastian Taimanao Camacho & †Dolores Borja Tudela Camacho
Brothers: †Javier M. Atalig and †Enrique M. Atalig
Sister-in-law: †Chong Quichocho Atalig
Brothers-in-law and Sisters-in-laws: †Santiago T. & †Josepha M. Camacho, †Froilan T. Camacho, and †Vicente T. & †Marcela N. Camacho

Her memory will forever live in the hearts of her:

Husband: David Tudela Camacho
Children:
Joseph & Lydia Barcinas: Alden, Janice, Rosa Jean, Bruce, Dion, Lisa, Dominic, and Mark
Juan & Patricia B.: Roben Jay, Ryan, Randy, Derek
Dolores C. & Juan Aguon: Victor, Sebastian, Doreen, and Stacilynn
Francisca: Spencer, Andave, Vinson, Angelo, Eva Rose
Henry & Bridgette DLG.: Joshua Clayton, Christian Lloyd, Henry Jr., David John, Britney Alayne, and Vanessa Lynn,
Serafin & Lillian C.: Jonathan, Joel, Justin Jude, and Serafin Jr.
Edward & Lourdes M.: Lance Edward and Amber Rose
David Jr. & Efiginia "Effie" S.: Daven, Dustin, Darron, Dylen, Abigail, Justin, and Remy Dee Rose
Miguel "Mike" & Charlotte DLG.: Brandon Michael, William Jesse, Bradley Alvin, Elizabeth Nicole, and Holden
Vicente & Ellen C. Santos: Vincent Shane, Kianna Samantha, Benellen, Vicente II, Jeremiah, Ana Marie, and Raymond
Anthony & Rose S. Pangelinan: Charisse, Raegine Agnes-Rose, Sebastian David-Anthony, and Spencer Jon

Brothers & Sisters-in-law: Marina V. Atalig, Dionicio M. & Berdine Atalig, Herman M. Atalig & Denise King
Sisters & brothers-in-laws: Ree Atalig Lee, Bernadita Atalig & Nicholas Nekai, Guadalupe A. & Edward Flores, Victoria A. & Ethan Gums III
Brothers-in-law & Sisters-in-law: Andres T. & Aida Camacho, Andrea B. Cabrera, Anunciacion "Asako" M. Camacho-Magofna
Caretaker: Maria Christine Danao

She is also survived by numerous Great-grandchildren, Godchildren, Nieces, and Nephews.

Nightly rosary is being said at 7:45 pm at Santa Remedios Church, Tanapag.
On December 24 rosary will be at 12 Noon

On Tuesday, December 29, 2009 our beloved Rosa will be escorted from the Borja Funeral Home at 7:00 a.m. to Mt. Carmel Cathedral.
Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m.
Followed by interment services at Tanapag Cemetery.

Thank you for your thoughts and prayers.
THE FAMILY

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

In Loving Memory of

Ellen Ebreo Castro

We would like to invite all relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the First Death Anniversary of our dearly beloved wife and mother.

Daily Mass will be offered at the San Antonio Church

Friday, December 25, 2009	8:00am
Saturday, December 26, 2009	6:00pm
Sunday, December 27, 2009	9:00am
Monday, December 28, 2009	6:00pm
Tuesday, December 29, 2009	6:00pm
Wednesday, December 30, 2009	6:00pm
Thursday, December 31, 2009	6:30pm
Friday, January 1, 2010	8:00am

The Eucharistic Celebration on the final day, **Saturday, January 2, 2010, will be at 6pm, at San Antonio Church.**
Please join us for dinner after the final mass at our family's residence in Koblerville.

Your presence and prayers will be greatly appreciated

Si Yu'us Ma'ase

From: John I. Castro, Jr. & Children, and the Castro and Ebreo families

Brittany Murphy had several movies in the works

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Brittany Murphy was a hardworking actress who was juggling multiple movie projects in the months leading up to her unexpected death.

While none of the films boasted the big budgets of Murphy's "8 Mile" or "Sin City," directors who recently worked with the 32-year-old actress say she was dedicated, insightful and happy as she wrapped two indie thrillers and prepared to start shooting a romantic comedy next month.

Murphy was pronounced dead at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center after collapsing at her Hollywood Hills home Sunday morning. The county coroner's office is awaiting the results of toxicology and tissue tests before releasing an official cause of death.

Murphy spent the month of June shooting "Abandoned," a thriller in which she stars as a woman who embarks on a frantic search for her boyfriend when he disappears from a hospital after a routine treatment.

Director Michael Feifer said the actress was delightful to work with and dedicated to the project.

"She knew her material, and she was on her game," he said Tuesday. "She was professional. She was there for me. She was healthy."

The role required Murphy to sprint through a parking structure and run up and down stairs.

"She's such a pro and so good at her craft that she could turn it on and off as necessary," Feifer said. One minute she'd be immersed in a dramatic scene, the next she'd be joking around with the crew or playing with her white Maltese, which often accompanied her on set.

Her husband, Simon Monjack, was also on set, serving as Murphy's hair and makeup artist.

"The two of them really took care of each other," Feifer recalled. "He was her teddy bear, and she was just his little princess."

Murphy took on "Abandoned" just days after wrapping her role as a psychiatrist in the mystery thriller "Something Wicked." Executive producer Scott Chambers told the Los Angeles Times that though Murphy appeared frail, he was impressed with her work ethic.

"She looked ill, as much as 10 pounds underweight, and she's a small person to begin with," he said. "She easily could have made an excuse not to come to work, but she didn't. She said, 'I've got to get better, but I want to do this part.'"

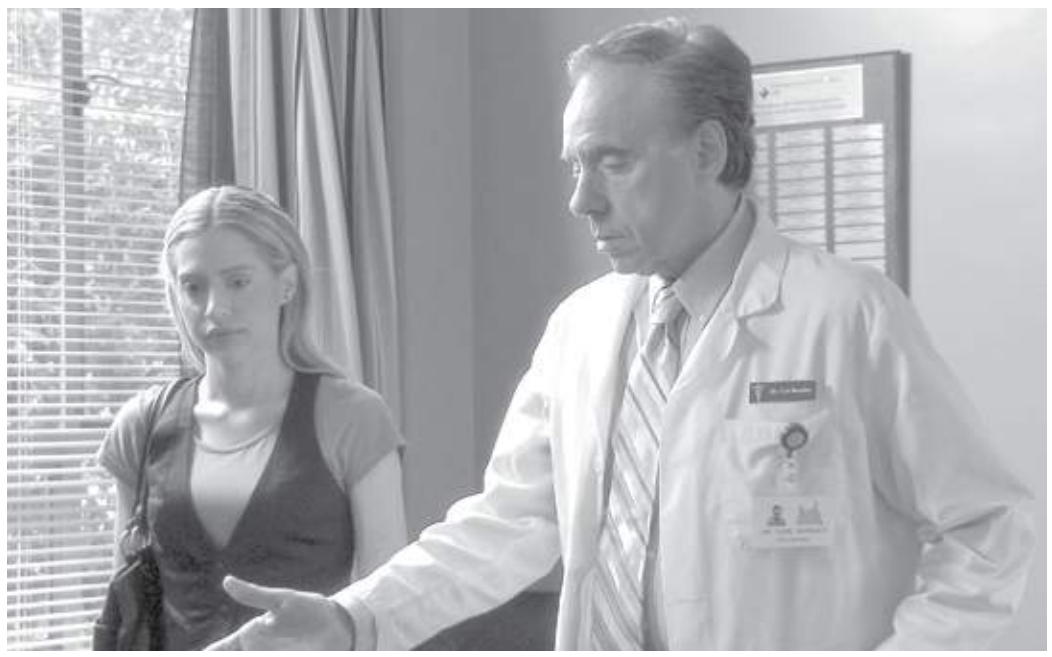
She spent three weeks working on the film. Next, she was set for another thriller, "The Caller," but parted ways with the filmmakers last month amid rumors she was fired.

In January, she was to begin shooting the romantic comedy "Shrinking Charlotte." Writer-director Rene Eram told E! News that Murphy was "impressive" and professional, but looked very thin.

"I noticed that she had dropped a lot of weight in the last six months," he said.

The future of the three films is unclear. None have secured theatrical distribution.

"Abandoned," which also stars Dean Cain, Mimi Rogers and Peter Bogdanovich, will complete post-production in about three months, Feifer said. He hopes the film will be released in 2010, but producers want to be sensitive about the timing.



AP

This photo provided by Hybrid Productions shows Brittany Murphy and Peter Bogdanovich on the set of "Abandoned" in Los Angeles in June 2009.

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Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Sqeakquel
Thursday 1:15 4:15 7:25
Justin Long, Matthew Gray Gubler
Children, Family • Rated PG

Synopsis
The lovable singing-and-dancing trio of famous marmots continues their big-screen hijinks with this follow-up to the 20th Century Fox smash-hit live-action/CG family comedy, this time incorporating a female version of the group entitled the Chipettes. Dr. Dolittle's Betty Thomas helms with Justin Long, Matthew Gray Gubler, and Jesse McCartney returning as the voices of Alvin, Simon, and Theodore.

Avatar
Thursday 12:15 3:30 6:45
Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana
Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
A paraplegic ex-marine war veteran is unwillingly sent to establish a human settlement on the distant planet of Pandora, only to find himself battling humankind alongside the planet's indigenous Na'vi race in this ambitious, digital 3-D sci-fi epic from Academy Award-winning Titanic director James Cameron. The film, which marks Cameron's first dramatic feature since 1997's Titanic, will be shot on the proprietary FUSION digital 3-D cameras developed by Cameron in collaboration with Vince Pace, and will offer a groundbreaking mix of live-action dramatic performances and computer-generated effects.

Did You Hear About The Morgans?
Thursday 1:20 4:10 7:30
Hugh Grant, Sarah Jessica Parker
Comedy • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
A well-off couple (Sarah Jessica Parker and Hugh Grant) in N.Y.C. get a taste of small-town life after they witness a murder and are relocated by the Witness Protection Program to Wyoming in this Columbia Pictures romantic comedy from Two Weeks Notice's writer/director Marc Lawrence.

The Princess And The Frog
Thursday 1:10 4:30 7:20
Anika Noni Rose, John Goodman
Comedy, Family • Rated G

Ninja Assassin
Thursday 1:30 4:20 7:10
Rain, Rick Yune
Action • Rated R

Twilight Saga: New Moon
Thursday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart
Thriller, Romance • Rated PG 13

2012
Thursday 1:05 4:05 7:05
John Cusack, Amanda Peet
Action, Thriller • Rated PG 13

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Fan convicted in NYC of harassing Ashanti's mother

NEW YORK (AP)—A would-be rapper was convicted Tuesday of harassing Ashanti's mother with a flurry of dirty photos and lewd text messages about the Grammy Award-winning R&B star.

Devar Hurd shook his head as a Manhattan jury delivered its verdict after two days of deliberations, finding him guilty of stalking and aggravated harassment for messages the singer's mother called scary and disgusting.

Hurd, a sometime model and car salesman from Griffith, Ind., said he thought the crude messages, photos of his genitals and a picture of the home where Ashanti's family lives were welcome.

The 31-year-old is being held without bail until his sentencing, set for Jan. 11. He faces up to two years in prison. His lawyer, Richard Verchick, left court without speaking to reporters and didn't immediately return a phone call afterward.

AP

This Oct. 5, 2009 picture shows Ashanti in New York.

Ashanti's mother, Tina Douglas, told jurors she didn't know Hurd when he began calling her and leaving messages recounting bizarre and rambling sexual fantasies about the singer. Douglas manages her daughter's multiplatinum-selling career.

Douglas said she told Hurd to leave her alone but he went on to send dozens of revolting text messages and pictures.

"It was just disgusting and humiliating and extremely frightening," Douglas testified, adding that she pulled Ashanti out of a rehearsal of "The Wiz" after Hurd sent a message that mentioned seeing the singer's car outside the theater.

Ashanti starred as Dorothy in an off-Broadway revival of the musical this summer.

Ritchie hopes hard work pays off with 'Holmes'

LONDON (AP)—All in all, Guy Ritchie has had a pretty good 2009. He had a blast making his big-budget thriller "Sherlock Holmes," stayed focused on his work—and avoided coverage of the fallout from his split with Madonna.

"I haven't read the papers for so long now," said Ritchie. "I don't watch TV.

"Head down, arms swinging—I've been like that for a couple of years now."

Ritchie

The British filmmaker and the queen of pop divorced in November 2008, eight years after they wed in a Scottish castle and became darlings of the tabloid press.

Fortunately, Ritchie, 41, had plenty to distract him from the inevitable media frenzy. He spent the year finishing "Holmes," which stars Robert Downey Jr. as the Victorian sleuth and Jude Law as trusty sidekick Dr. Watson. The film opens around the world this week.

Ritchie said he enjoyed making the film "more than anything I've worked on before"—largely due to the presence of Law and Downey. The three are now firm friends.

"They are very creative," Ritchie said. "I always felt whilst we were making it that we were making something that was a collaboration, a collection of creative ideas."

"Sherlock Holmes" gave Ritchie his biggest budget to date—a reported $80 million—after smaller-scale Brit gangster flicks like "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels," ''Snatch" and "RocknRolla."

Ritchie, a fan of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's detective stories since childhood, said "it seemed like a natural progression to go from what I'd done previously to something that was iconic and English but at the same time had the deep pockets of Hollywood."

If the film fares well, sequels are in the offing—and that would make Ritchie very happy.

"Work comes first. It's primary, not secondary," he said.

"Making films is like a fantasy, and the older I get the more of a fantasy it seems to become. So I feel very lucky to be part of something like this."

Taylor Swift, Beyonce among Grammy performers

AP
Grammy-nominated country music artist Taylor Swift poses for a photo at a hotel in the Universal City area of Los Angeles in this Nov. 5, 2008 file photo.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Taylor Swift and Beyonce are among the artists set to perform next month at the 52nd annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, it was announced Tuesday.

Other performers include the Black Eyed Peas, Maxwell and country trio Lady Antebellum. The Recording Academy said other performers will be announced later.

Beyonce, a 10-time Grammy winner, has 10 nominations, including record of the year for "Halo," album of the year for "I Am ... Sasha Fierce" and song of the year for "Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)." Country singer Swift has eight nominations, including record and song of the year for "You Belong With Me," and album of the year for "Fearless."

A stage-crashing Kanye West (who has six Grammy nominations) interrupted Swift's acceptance speech at this year's MTV Video Music Awards to say Beyonce should have won for best female video instead. West later apologized.

Swift, 20, is no stranger to the Grammy stage. She performed a duet of her song "Fifteen" with Miley Cyrus at last year's ceremony. The two sat on stools surrounded by the audience, while Swift played guitar.

Swift may opt to do something more flashy this time around, after honing her performing skills on her first headlining tour this summer. Her "Fearless" tour sold out everywhere she went. She was the year's best-selling artist outside of Michael Jackson, and her "Fearless" CD, which is also nominated for best country album, has sold more than 4.5 million copies.

The Grammys will be presented at the Staples Center on Jan. 31. The show will air on CBS.

Hollywood's domestic box office tops $10 billion

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Hollywood is crossing a new milestone as domestic revenues top $10 billion for the first time.

Box-office analyst Paul Dergarabedian of Hollywood.com projected that 2009 receipts would pass that mark Tuesday.

The box office already surpassed the $9.7 billion total in 2007, which had been the previous record year for domestic ticket sales.

Dergarabedian estimates the movie industry could finish this year with revenues in the $10.5 billion range.

A huge Christmas weekend is ahead with Robert Downey Jr.'s "Sherlock Holmes," Meryl Streep's "It's Complicated" and an "Alvin and the Chipmunks" sequel hitting theaters.

Cher auctions Hawaii home; estimate at $8M to $12M

HONOLULU (AP)—Cher's six-bedroom Hawaii home overlooking the Pacific Ocean is set to be auctioned Jan. 18.

Concierge Auctions estimated the three-quarter-acre property with views of the Hualalai Golf Course was worth about $8 million to $12 million.

A Web site set up for the sale says the property has a main residence and five freestanding bungalows totaling 8,821 square feet. Four have bedroom suites, and the fifth is a media bungalow with a bar.

It says the residence was designed by Cher and "balances modern sophistication with traditional Balinese style."

In all, it has six bedrooms, six bathrooms and two half baths.

Randy Quaid pleads not guilty in fraud case

SANTA BARBARA, California (AP) — Actor Randy Quaid and his wife Evi finally appeared in court Tuesday and pleaded not guilty to felony charges of defrauding an innkeeper.

Randy Quaid is best-known for supporting roles in films such as "Independence Day" and "National Lampoon's Vacation." He is the older brother of actor Dennis Quaid.

The Quaids skipped previous court hearings without explanation after being accused of using an invalid credit card to defraud San Ysidro Ranch in Montecito of more than $10,000.

Their attorney Robert Sanger did not immediately return a call seeking comment. He has said the Quaids repaid the ranch and hoped to resolve the case.

It appeared the Quaids had forfeited a total of $40,000 in bail when they failed to appear for a hearing last week.

But a judge allowed that money to stand as bail Tuesday and freed the two defendants, prosecutor Lee Carter said.

They were taken into custody in Texas over the weekend after a previous arrest there on Sept. 24.

Another hearing was set for March 1.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Atlanta rapper T.I. released from Arkansas prison

ATLANTA (AP)—Atlanta rapper T.I. has been released from a federal prison in Arkansas and is headed to a halfway house in Georgia. A lawyer for T.I. said the rapper was released Tuesday morning. T.I., whose real name is Clifford Harris Jr., last May began serving his sentence of a year and a day for illegal firearms possession and possessing a gun as a convicted felon. Steve Sadow said his client was expected to report to Dismas Charities halfway house in Atlanta on Tuesday night and will be there for up to three months. Sadow said Harris "did his very best to adjust to his circumstances" in prison and knew he had to pay for his crime. He said Harris was most looking forward to getting back to his family and being as productive as he can be.

Bill Cosby named Marian Anderson Award winner

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Bill Cosby will be the next recipient of the Marian Anderson Award. The Philadelphia native is to accept the award and $100,000 prize at an April 6 ceremony at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia. The comedian, actor and educator is being honored for his cultural impact as well as his work in encouraging academic achievement and calling for accountability in the black community. The award is named for the famed singer and Philadelphia native who used her art in the service of social justice. It honors artists whose leadership benefits society. It was first awarded in 1998 to singer Harry Belafonte. Other past winners include author Maya Angelou and actors Sidney Poitier, Danny Glover, Elizabeth Taylor and Gregory Peck.

'Mister Ed' actress Connie Hines dies at age 79

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—Actress Connie Hines, who played Wilbur's wife on the popular 1960s television show "Mister Ed" has died. She was 79. Her "Mister Ed" co-star Alan Young told the Los Angeles Times that Hines died Friday at her Beverly Hills home from complications of heart problems. Hines was best known for portraying Carol Post on the show that featured a talking horse. She wrote a book in 2007 entitled "Mister Ed and Me and More." Born in Massachusetts, Hines also appeared in the 1960 film "Thunder in Carolina" and TV shows that included "The Millionaire," "Johnny Ringo" and "Riverboat." Hines was married twice, the last time to Lee Savin, an entertainment lawyer and producer who died in 1995.

Arnold Stang, actor known for nerdy roles, dies

BOSTON (AP)—Arnold Stang, an actor who appeared alongside Milton Berle and Frank Sinatra and was known for his nerdy looks and distinctive nasal voice, has died. He was 91. Stang died Sunday of pneumonia at Newton-Wellesley Hospital in Massachusetts, said JoAnne Stang, his wife of 60 years. She attributed her husband's career longevity to his willingness to tackle any professional challenge. "He was really unique, because he could perform in any role, comedy or drama, he just loved it all," she said Tuesday. "He always thought of himself just as an actor, not any particular kind of actor, but just an actor who would play whatever he was asked to play." Despite often playing goofy characters, Stang was the consummate professional, preparing the same for his biggest roles and the smallest commercials. "I remember how smart he was, and how hardworking, and how disciplined he was, no matter what the role," his wife said. Stang is also survived by son David and daughter Deborah. Funeral services are private.

Deceased relatives' letters link different generations

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I'm writing in response to "Stuck for an Answer" (Oct. 9), whose wife found a box of letters written by her late mother to her father. She didn't know whether to read or destroy them.

If Mom had wanted the letters destroyed, she would have already done it. As a genealogist and historian, my advice is to keep them in a safe place for future generations. I have correspondence between my great-great-grandmother, her daughters and their daughters that dates back to the 1870s and extends through the 1940s. I also have her diaries, her daughter's autograph book from high school graduation in 1880, and diaries written by her granddaughter that date from the time she was 16 until her death at the age of 90 in 1998.

I am sure my great-great-grandfather never thought I'd be reading the letter he wrote to his brother during the Civil War in 1865, mentioning all the women in the city he was going to spend some time with! Abby, "Stuck's" wife should cherish the letters she found, even if she never reads them. They are precious heirlooms for future generations that will teach them about the impact of World War II on young love.

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

DEAR HISTORICALLY: I suggested to "Stuck" that reading the letters would allow his wife new insight into her parents' early life. Many readers agreed and offered personal anecdotes. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: My dear friend "Zack's" father left him letters he had exchanged with Zack's mother during World War II. In one of them was the information that Zack had a half-sister in Italy! If he had not read those letters, he would never have known about this member of his family.

"Stuck's" letters have survived 60 years. He can rightfully suppose that his mother-in-law saved them with the intent of passing them on. Those letters have tremendous historical significance. There are few firsthand documents like these remaining. I'm sure the World War II museum in Washington, D.C., would love to have them. Every firsthand story helps us construct our history. Can you imagine what we would have missed if 15-year-old Anne Frank's diary had remained unpublished?

WELL-READ IN NEW YORK

DEAR ABBY: My mother asked if my sisters and I wanted to read the letters Dad had sent her during the war. We declined because we felt the letters were private. Mom requested that they be buried with her when she died. When she passed away, we could not immediately locate them. Then, just before interment, my sister found the letters. The funeral director allowed us to seal them in a box to be placed in the ground with Mom's burial urn. They are now, once again, close to her and Dad, and everyone finds that knowledge comforting.

BEVERLY IN ALBANY

DEAR ABBY: I knew growing up that Mom kept letters from my father in her lingerie drawer. When she died in 1996, I placed them with her in her casket. When my sister-in-law asked if I had read them, I said, "Absolutely not—they were for Mom's eyes, not mine." My advice to "Stuck" would be to destroy them.

DONNA IN MARYLAND

DEAR ABBY: When our parents died 22 years ago, we also found letters he wrote her while in the Army. My sisters and I pored over them—laughing, crying, learning new things about them. It allowed us a glimpse into something we never thought we would see—our parents as a young couple, newly in love and afraid about the war. The letters are a family treasure. Of all the things we have acquired since their deaths, they remain the most precious of all.

MARY IN PHOENIX

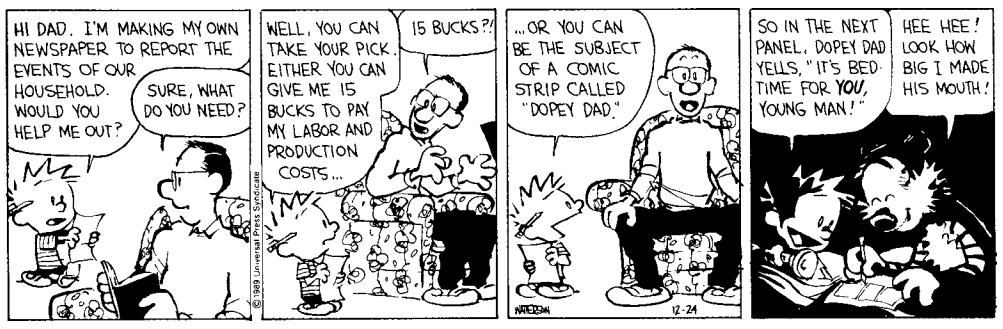
■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


HI DAD. I'M MAKING MY OWN NEWSPAPER TO REPORT THE EVENTS OF OUR HOUSEHOLD. WOULD YOU HELP ME OUT?
SURE, WHAT DO YOU NEED?
WELL, YOU CAN TAKE YOUR PICK. EITHER YOU CAN GIVE ME 15 BUCKS TO PAY MY LABOR AND PRODUCTION COSTS...
15 BUCKS?!
...OR YOU CAN BE THE SUBJECT OF A COMIC STRIP CALLED "DOPEY DAD."
SO IN THE NEXT PANEL, DOPEY DAD YELLS, "IT'S BED-TIME FOR YOU, YOUNG MAN!"
HEE HEE! LOOK HOW BIG I MADE HIS MOUTH!
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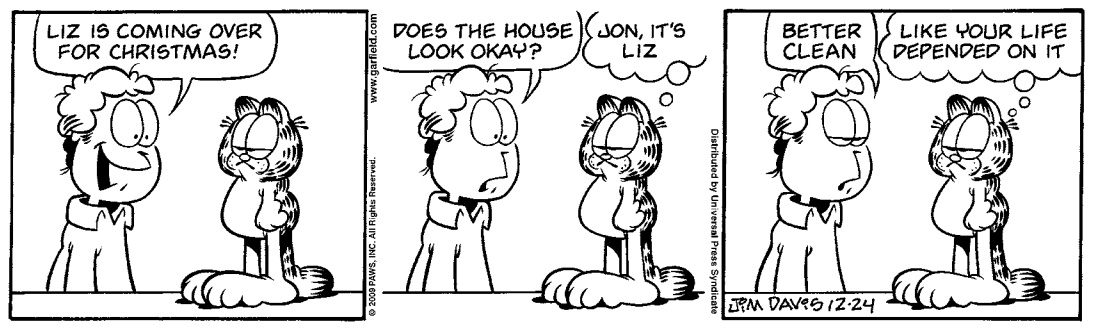
12-24

Garfield®

By Jim Davis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JIM DAVIS 12-24

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

AH, CHRISTMAS EVE. I LOVE IT! SO MUCH ANTICIPATION! I CAN LITERALLY FEEL THE EXCITEMENT SHOOTING UP MY LEGS!
DAD. YOU'RE STANDING ON THE HEAT MISER PLASTIC ORNAMENT.
www.gocomics.com
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12-24

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Org. that caught Dillinger
4 Carpet type
8 Criticism
12 Bradstreet partner
13 Franc replacement
14 Lasso
15 Helped
17 Do as you're told
18 Greek mountain
19 Cunning
21 Buxom
24 Nevertheless
25 Illustrations
26 Conger, e.g.
28 Bottom point
32 On in years
34 Victory
36 — Strauss jeans
37 Groucho's "tattooed lady"
39 Spacecraft compartment
41 Enervate
42 Energy
44 Kind of inspiration
46 Do anew
50 Petrol
51 Finished
52 Withstood
56 Catchall abbr.
57 Pace
58 Blunder
59 Otherwise
60 Small salamanders
61 Rotation duration

DOWN
1 Med. watchdog grp.
2 Clear the tables
3 Put one's foot down
4 Elmo's street
5 Shack
6 Belligerent Olympian
7 Devout
8 Direct, as an attack
9 Earring site
10 Tarzan's clique
11 Singer Alicia
16 Altar affirmative
20 Longing
21 Canaanite idol
22 Excessive revelry
23 Evergreen type
27 Back talk
29 Stopped
30 Terrible guy?
31 Mature
33 Tie breaker?
35 Affirmative action
38 Help
40 0 through 9
43 Combine
45 Anatomical duct
46 "When in —, ..."
47 Satan's specialty
48 Disarray
49 Canadian flag symbol
53 Perch
54 Historic time
55 Parched

Solution time: 25 mins.

C	O	D	■	A	V	I	D	■	G	A	S	P
A	B	A	■	N	I	N	E	■	A	P	S	E
H	I	S	■	N	A	N	C	Y	D	R	E	W
N	E	H	R	U	■	■	K	E	G	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	L	A	S	■	S	E	R	U	M
D	R	E	W	U	P	O	N	■	T	O	R	E
R	A	G	■	S	P	R	E	E	■	A	G	O
A	T	O	M	■	S	T	A	N	D	R	E	W
B	A	S	I	S	■	A	R	C	O	■	■	■
■	■	■	D	A	B	■	■	R	O	A	S	T
D	R	E	W	C	A	R	E	Y	■	B	A	H
I	O	T	A	■	W	I	M	P	■	U	S	E
S	W	A	Y	■	L	O	U	T	■	T	H	Y

Yesterday's answer 12-24

1	2	3	■	4	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12			■	13				■	14			
15			16					■	17			
■	■	18			■	19		20				
21	22				23	■	24			■	■	■
25			■	26		27	■	28		29	30	31
32			33	■	34		35	■	36			
37				38	■	39		40	■	41		
■	■	■	42		43	■	44		45			
46	47	48				49	■	50			■	■
51				■	52		53				54	55
56				■	57				■	58		
59				■	60				■	61		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Ryan Seacrest, 35; Ricky Martin, 38; Diedrich Bader, 43; Mary Higgins Clark, 82

Happy Birthday: You'll be torn between what you want and what you need. Conflict can be expected as everything comes to a head. Look beyond your current situation to make your choices. It may not be easy but you will find your way to a far more comfortable place. Your numbers are 4, 14, 17, 21, 26, 35, 41

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't let friends or family upset you. Put the past behind you and look to the future with optimism. A financial loss is apparent if you are too generous. Romance is in the stars; show your true feelings. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Put your plans on the table and discuss what you want to do with someone who shares your life and your interests. Get back to your roots. Bring joy to older relatives who have worked so hard on your behalf. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Consider what's been going on in your professional life and you will realize why it was so important for you to work hard. Now you can relax and enjoy the moment with friends and family. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Thank family and friends for the support they have shown you this past year. Now it's time for you to offer your assistance to those who don't have as much as you. This is the perfect time to give back to your community. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): This is not the time to indulge or to blame others for your losses or shortcomings. Instead, forgive, forget and give thanks for what you have and the people who have stood by you. Extend help to those less fortunate. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You can please everyone by offering good advice and practical presents. Entertain friends and family with class but within budget. Don't worry about the things you can't change. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Make this a very special day for the people you care about. Put others at ease and make the most out of any situation you face. An original idea will displace some of the negativity that surrounds you. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Plan a short jaunt to visit and connect with old friends or family members you don't see very often. You will be sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of the people you talk with and should reserve judgment until you assess what's actually happening. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Don't hide the way you feel. Do what's in your heart and you will send the perfect message. A comforting smile, affection or special offering will show your intentions perfectly. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Helping the underdog will pay off and play a major role in the way you view your own life and your future. A commitment made to a

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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cause you believe in will bring you more joy than you ever imagined possible. It's time to break old habits and ties. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): There are people to whom you owe a lot and you should accommodate them at this time. Give your time, your help and your emotional support. Don't end the year on a sad note or begin the new one with uncertainty. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): This year you should be focusing on the people who really need your help. You may not please everyone with your choices regarding festive events but, by giving to those in need, you will speak volumes about who you have become and what you will strive to be in the future. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are determined to get what you want when you want it. You are a leader and are ambitious. You welcome whatever changes come your way.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8		7		5		1	
3				2	1			9
	2	4					9	
		8	9		2	3		
	5					7	6	
2			1	5				8
	6		3		8		4	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/24

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

9	8	7	2	3	4	1	6	5
3	1	2	8	5	6	9	4	7
6	4	5	1	9	7	8	3	2
5	6	8	3	7	9	4	2	1
4	7	3	6	2	1	5	8	9
2	9	1	4	8	5	6	7	3
7	2	9	5	6	8	3	1	4
8	3	4	9	1	2	7	5	6
1	5	6	7	4	3	2	9	8

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/23

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

UNIVERSITY DIPLOMAS **Solution: 8 letters**

A	V	E	N	G	T	G	L	L	O	R	C	S	E	S
C	I	A	D	D	R	O	F	X	O	A	B	R	D	A
A	E	R	L	A	S	A	B	E	M	O	U	R	T	C
D	S	C	D	E	L	E	D	B	J	T	A	N	P	H
E	N	E	R	N	D	O	R	U	U	W	E	L	A	I
M	W	M	A	E	A	I	C	F	A	V	A	K	S	E
Y	O	R	L	L	D	X	C	C	E	N	S	T	B	V
N	G	L	U	G	M	I	E	T	A	A	D	A	I	E
T	U	M	E	E	T	A	T	L	I	C	A	S	R	T
M	N	G	G	A	D	I	M	H	A	O	H	S	E	E
I	A	A	T	R	T	N	U	A	E	U	N	E	T	L
P	T	I	U	F	Ⓢ	Ⓟ	Ⓐ	Ⓒ	T	S	R	L	T	P
S	O	I	U	R	D	E	G	R	E	E	I	E	A	M
N	D	M	R	A	R	T	S	I	G	E	R	S	A	O
C	E	R	E	M	O	N	Y	S	E	S	R	U	O	C

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Academy, Accolade, Achieve, Alexandria, Alma Mater, Alumni, Awards, Bedellu, Biretta, Cachet, Cambridge, Caps, Ceremony, Citation, Complete, Courses, Credit, Dean, Degree, Druid, Event, Future, Gowns, Grade, Graduand, Grandeur, Haksa, Jobs, Laurea, Mufti, Oxford, Page, Plan, Registrar, Scroll, Sermon, Stage, Tassel, Thesis, Valediction

Yesterday's Answer: Sonatas

We listened to your requests! **TREASURY #6** is the first-ever Wonderword book containing only 20 x 20 puzzles, with 75 of these large puzzles. To order, send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 p&h ($14.20 total each, U.S. funds only) for the first volume, $1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Wonderword, Universal Uclick, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

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WHATZIT Solution: Bad advice

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Northern Mariana Islands RETIREMENT FUND

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

#JVA10-002 CLOSING DATE: **Until Filled**

The NMI Retirement Fund is seeking a professional and motivated individual to work in a busy and challenging office as a Legal Counsel for the Fund. Salary maximum is $70,000, depending on experience. Benefits are commensurate with the responsibilities assigned to the successful candidate and in compliance with CNMI laws.

Interested applicants must submit their application, resume, educational credentials, police, clearance as others as outlined in the JVA package. The complete package is available from the Fund, located on Capitol Hill, Saipan; or by e-mail from the Administrator. **Mailed and hand delivered packages must be marked "JVA10-002 Confidential," and must have the applicant's name and return address on the outside of the envelope.**

Mark Aguon, Administrator
NMI Retirement Fund
P.O. Box 501247
Saipan, MP 96950-1247
E-mail: administrator01@nmiretirement.com

Northern Marianas College Human Resources Office

Vacancy Announcements

VA #	Position	Closing Date
08-064	Outreach Counselor	Until Filled
08-068	Instructor, Medical Health Science	Until Filled
09-028	Program Manager I (UCEDD Program)	Until Filled
09-042	Director, Student Support Services	Until Filled
09-046	Department Chair, Sciences, Math, Health & Athletics	Until Filled
09-052	Director III, Library Programs and Services	Until Filled
10-003	Program Coordinator/Counselor	Until Filled
10-006	Director, Office of Admissions and Records	Until Filled
10-007	Accountant II (Payroll)	12/24/09
10-008	Instructor, Social Sciences	12/29/09
10-009	Department Chair, Nursing	12/29/09
10-010	Program Manager III	12/29/09
10-011	Program Manager III/Grants Writer	12/29/09
10-012	Director, U.S. Apprenticeship Program	12/29/09
10-013	Program Manager (Student Engagement, First Year-Students)	12/29/09
10-014	Special Assistant to the President	12/29/09
10-015	Data Entry Clerk (4 positions)	12/29/09
10-016	Instructor, English	12/30/09
10-017	Administrative Manager IV	12/30/09
10-018	Administrative Manager IV	12/30/09
10-019	Director, School of Education	12/30/09
10-020	Dean, School of Education	12/30/09

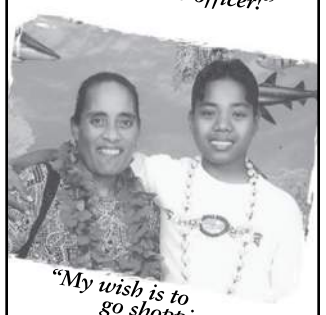
If you would like to learn more about a position and/or the Northern Marianas College, please visit our website at http://www.nmcnet.edu or contact the Human Resources Office at (670) 234-5498 ext. 1017 or e-mail teresab@nmcnet.edu.

share the power of a wish℠

"I want to meet Winnie the Pooh!"

"My wish is to have my own PC with a DVD player and CD burner!"

"When I grow up, I want to become a police officer!"


"My wish is to go shopping!"

"My wish is to celebrate my Sweet 16th birthday with my friends and family!"

22 years of making wishes come true!
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M-F daily

Saipan Tribune

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
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• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
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Classified Ads

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- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

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BAD + VICE

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Find today's solution in this section

Fiancee of late Bengals' Henry: He changed my life

WESTWEGO, La. (AP)—Chris Henry's fiancee wept as she spoke about the late Cincinnati Bengals receiver Tuesday, saying that while she often got credit for helping him stay clear of trouble, he changed her life as well.

Henry, 26, was killed after he fell out of the bed of pickup truck driven by his fiancee, Loleini Tonga, during what police called a domestic dispute. Police are investigating, but no charges have been filed.

Tonga, wearing large sunglasses, paused to gather herself repeatedly as she spoke to hundreds of mourners at his funeral—including Henry's teammates—who filled the grandstands at a suburban New Orleans events center. Tonga professed eternal love for Henry and promised to raise their children the way he would want.

"Can't nobody know the way I'm feeling right now. No one can explain the relationship that me and Chris had. In six years of knowing each other—through hard times, good times—we loved each other very much," she said. "People say I helped change his life. No. He changed mine."

Mourners clapped briefly as Tonga slowly made her way back to her front row seat.

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, Bengals players, coaches and members of the front office, as well as other NFL players including New Orleans Saints running back Reggie Bush, were among those who attended. The Bengals wore black, round buttons on their lapels with Henry's No. 15. Many from Henry's hometown of Belle Chasse wore red ribbons with a small photo of Henry that read: "In loving memory" and "Chris 'Slim' Henry."

Speaking before the service, Goodell said Henry's legacy would be a good person who made mistakes, then sought to better himself. That his life was cut short just as he was turning it around made Henry's story so tragic, Goodell said.

AP

Seini Henry, daugther of Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Chris Henry, looks at a message that she wrote to Henry before a memorial service in Westwego, La., Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2009.

"His future as a husband and a father were important to him," Goodell said. "He was a young man that struggled, made some decisions that he regretted, but he put himself on the right path. And I'm proud of that. I'm proud of him."

Cincinnati quarterback Carson Palmer and head coach Marvin Lewis delivered eulogies. Lewis said before the service that Henry touched a lot of people in his very short life.

"It's a bright story and one that didn't get to get all the way to the end of it, which is the most unfortunate part," the coach said. "We'll miss Chris' sparkling smile."

Palmer made some chuckle as he remembered Henry's friendly demeanor.

"He walked past my locker every day to shake my hand as I said, 'Good morning,' and every day he said, 'What's up, cuz,'" Palmer said. "We've all seen and experienced different sides of Chris, and with every side he showed us, we saw just how kind and gentle his heart was."

Henry grew up in the small, suburban community Belle Chasse, not far from the funeral site. Shane Shelley, 26, was Henry's high school quarterback when they made it to the state title game in 2001, their senior year.

"We really lost a good friend, a brother, one of my best friends," said a watery-eyed Shelley. "It's hard. We lost one of us. We're going to miss him. We love him."

Henry died Thursday, a day after he fell out of the truck in North Carolina, where he had been recovering from a broken forearm that ended his season. Police said Henry and his fiancee got into an argument at the Tonga family home and she drove away on a curvy residential street near downtown Charlotte. Henry jumped into the truck's bed.

A witness has said he heard Henry say, "If you take off, I'm going to jump off the truck and kill myself." A 911 caller told a dispatcher she saw a shirtless man wearing a cast "beating on the back of this truck window."

Police said Tonga stopped to assist Henry when he fell about a half-mile from the home.

Tonga and Henry had two children together, Chris Jr. and Demarcus, and they also cared for Tonga's two other children, Seini and Denalya.

Henry's football career was marred by off-the-field problems, beginning when he played college ball at West Virginia. His troubles continued during a five-year NFL career. He was suspended five times for arrests ranging from weapons charges to drugs.

The Bengals said Henry had turned his life around this season and showed a renewed focus on his football career. A thigh injury slowed him early in the season, but he had 12 catches for 236 yards. His 19.7-yard average per catch led the team before he broke his left forearm during a win last month over Baltimore.

Henry dreamed of playing in the NFL, but after he was ejected from a game and suspended for another at West Virginia, the Bengals were the only team to bring him in for a predraft visit in 2005.

Selected in the third round, Henry played a vital role as a speedy, deep threat as Cincinnati reached the playoffs in his rookie season. But in the final month of the season he was arrested for marijuana possession.

"The Chris Henry I knew was a good quiet young man, wasn't a troublemaker," said Shelley, his high school friend. "That's what everybody needs to know. He was a good man, a good father."

Vazquez back to Bronx as Cabrera heads to Braves

NEW YORK (AP)—When Javier Vazquez last threw a pitch for the New York Yankees, it was a nadir in the team's storied history. He gave up two homers to Johnny Damon, including a key grand slam, as the Yankees lost Game 7 of the 2004 AL championship series to Boston.

Now Vazquez is back, acquired Tuesday from the Atlanta Braves for outfielder Melky Cabrera as New York tweaks its championship roster in an effort to win back-to-back titles.

"Hopefully, I can erase those memories," Vazquez said.

And while Vazquez has returned to fortify a rotation headed by CC Sabathia, A.J. Burnett and Andy Pettitte, there still appears to be no room on the 2010 Yankees for Damon, a key to this year's World Series win.

General manager Brian Cashman said he didn't intend to add another "high-end player" with "dollars attached on a large scale." That would appear to exclude Damon, who turned down the Yankees' $14 million, two-year offer last week and countered at $20 million as the team was reaching an agreement with Nick Johnson to become its designated hitter.

Coming off a $52 million, four-year contract, Damon hasn't lowered his price enough for suddenly budget-conscious New York.

"The Yankees have always been about impact players and Johnny certainly has proven his value to the team in the locker room, on the field, in key situations in the postseason," Damon's agent, Scott Boras, said Tuesday. "It's rare that those types of players are available to you at short-term reasonable costs to assist a team in repeating a world championship."

In a trade that pushed New York's payroll for next season over $200 million, the Yankees also obtained left-hander Boone Logan and sent the Braves a pair of pitching prospects, left-hander Mike Dunn and right-hander Arodys Vizcaino, along with about $500,000.

It's hard to imagine the Yankees using Brett Gardner or winter meeting draft pick Jaime Hoffman as their regular left fielder. While Cashman sounded as if he was ruling out Damon and fellow free agents Matt Holliday and Jason Bay, Mark DeRosa could fit into his price range. While DeRosa's agent, Lonnie Cooper, has spoken with Cashman, Cooper said the GM hasn't discussed any "next steps."

Atlanta had six starting pitchers after giving Tim Hudson a $28 million, three-year contract in November. The trade left the Braves with a rotation that includes Hudson, Jair Jurrjens, Tommy Hanson, Derek Lowe and Kenshin Kawakami.

"We knew that we would have an extra pitcher that would allow us to improve our club in another area and so we have worked hard the last two months to try to figure out the best package that we could acquire," Braves general manager Frank Wren said.

Vazquez, a 33-year-old right-hander, is coming off an outstanding season. He was 15-10 with a 2.87 ERA and 238 strikeouts this year for the Braves and finished fourth in NL Cy Young Award voting.

One of baseball's most durable pitchers and top strikeout artists, Vazquez has reached at least 198 innings and 32 starts in each of the past 10 seasons.

He started 10-5 with a 3.56 ERA for the Yankees in 2004 and made his only All-Star team but faded to a 4-5 record and 6.92 ERA after the break, when he was bothered by an aching shoulder.

His first stint in New York ended miserably, when he relieved Kevin Brown trailing 2-0 in Game 7 of the ALCS and allowed a first-pitch grand slam to Damon, then gave up a two-run homer to Damon in the fourth.

Vazquez was dealt to Arizona after the season in the trade that brought Randy Johnson to New York. Following a year with the Diamondbacks, he spent three seasons with the Chicago White Sox, where manager Ozzie Guillen said he hadn't been a big-game pitcher.

"I don't really want to get into, you know, Ozzie said this or whatever," said Vazquez, who has a 142-139 record and 4.19 ERA in 12 seasons.

He will make $11.5 million next year and can become a free agent after the season. New York's top four starters will combine for $64 million in payroll—more than four teams paid their entire rosters last season.

With the trade and including the not-yet-finalized signing of Nick Johnson, the Yankees' payroll stands at $200.9 million for 16 signed players. The trade allows Joba Chamberlain or Phil Hughes to remain in the bullpen.

"There's a whole domino effect that this one transaction actually has through our 12-man pitching staff," Cashman said.

Cabrera had been the Yankees' starting center fielder for most of the last three seasons. After losing the job to Gardner during spring training this year, he quickly regained it and hit .274 with 13 homers and 68 RBIs, helping the Yankees win the World Series for the first time since 2000. But he has a .239 postseason average with just six RBIs in 67 at-bats.

A versatile switch-hitter, Cabrera made $1,425,000 last season and is eligible for free agency after the 2012 season.

"He has the ability to play all three outfield positions," Wren said. "He's just the perfect complement for the way we like to play the game."

Logan, acquired by the Braves from the White Sox in the Vazquez trade last December, was 1-1 with a 5.19 ERA in 20 relief appearances. He held left-handers to a .231 average and figures to fill the hole created by the departure of Phil Coke, sent to Detroit in a deal that brought New York center fielder Curtis Granderson.

The 24-year-old Dunn had a combined 99 strikeouts in 73 1-3 innings at Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre and Double-A Trenton, going 4-3 with a 3.31 ERA in 38 relief appearances. He made his major league debut on Sept. 4 and had a 6.75 ERA in four appearances.

Vizcaino, who is 19, was 2-4 with a 2.13 ERA at Class-A Staten Island, striking out 52 in 42 1-3 innings. With the deal, Atlanta freed up payroll to acquire a power hitter.

"We've been focused on that all offseason," Wren said.

Lakers hold off Thunder for 5th straight win

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kobe Bryant scored 40 points for the sixth time this season, and the NBA-leading Los Angeles Lakers shook off a rough first half before hanging on for their 16th victory in 17 games, 111-108 over the Oklahoma City Thunder on Tuesday night.

Pau Gasol had 15 points and 11 rebounds for the road-weary Lakers, who needed two last-minute free throws apiece from Bryant and Derek Fisher to win their first game back from a five-game road trip.

After trailing by 12 in the first half, Los Angeles blew most of an 11-point lead in the fourth quarter. Baskets by Russell Westbrook and James Harden twice cut the Lakers' lead to one in the final 25 seconds, but Bryant and Fisher sealed Los Angeles' 12th straight win over Oklahoma City.

Kevin Durant scored 30 points before fouling out with 1:31 to play, and former UCLA star Westbrook had 21 points and 13 assists for the Thunder, who dropped back below .500 with their fifth loss in six games. Despite a strong start and finish at Staples Center, the Thunder haven't beaten the Lakers since they were the Seattle SuperSonics.

Thabo Sefolosha scored 16 points for the Thunder, but just three after halftime—and the guard missed an open 3-point attempt to tie it in the final two minutes.

Fisher's season high-tying 15 points included two free throws with 14.9 seconds left, followed by a missed 3-point attempt by Westbrook.

Playing at home for the first time since breaking his right index finger in a game against Minnesota, Bryant had another injury scare when he landed awkwardly on his left knee while putting up a backward layup with 5:08 to play. Bryant stayed down on the court for several moments, but shot his own free throws after a timeout—only to take an elbow to the jaw from Westbrook with 3:55 left.

Bryant persevered, drawing Durant's sixth foul before hitting two free throws with 19.5 seconds left in the 102nd 40-point game of his career.

AP

Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant, center, goes up for a basket against Oklahoma City Thunder's Thabo Sefolosha (2) and Nenad Krstic during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles, Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2009.

Celtics 103, Pacers 94

In Boston, the Boston Celtics came from a 12-point third-quarter deficit to run down the Indiana Pacers and win, boosting their lead in the NBA's Eastern Conference.

Paul Pierce missed his first 10 shots but then scored 16 points in the fourth quarter, including seven straight, to put Boston ahead for good.

Pierce finished with 21 points, going 12 for 13 from the free throw line to make up for his slow start from the floor. Kendrick Perkins scored 19 points to go with eight rebounds.

Indiana's Troy Murphy had 24 points and a season-high 18 rebounds but the Pacers gave up a 15-point halftime lead to fall to a fourth straight loss.

Hawks 112, Timberwolves 87

In Minneapolis, Jamal Crawford scored 26 points and Joe Johnson added 21 points and six assists to lead Atlanta past Minnesota.

The Hawks moved to 20-7, equalling the best start in franchise history. They are 5-0 against teams from the Northwest Division.

Minnesota's Kevin Love had 15 points and matched a career high with 19 rebounds.

Bobcats 88, Pistons 76

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Gerald Wallace had 29 points and 12 rebounds in his return after missing a game with severe headaches, leading Charlotte over undermanned Detroit.

Stephen Jackson added 13 points despite playing with a sore back for the sharp-shooting Bobcats, who held a comfortable lead over the final three quarters and ended a run of three straight losses.

Knicks 88, Bulls 81

In New York, David Lee rattled in the clinching jumper with 5.5 seconds left as New York held on to beat Chicago.

Lee finished with 18 points and a career high-tying 21 rebounds.

One night after blowing a 35-point third-quarter lead in a home loss to Sacramento, the Bulls nearly battled back from a huge deficit in this one but New York prevailed for its third straight victory.

Derrick Rose scored 22 of his 26 points in the second half for the Bulls, who whittled a 22-point deficit to one in the final 2 minutes but couldn't get level.

Grizzlies 121, Warriors 108

In Memphis, Tennessee, Memphis withstood a strong start by Golden State to beat the slumping Warriors.

Zach Randolph scored a season-high 33 points and grabbed 18 rebounds, while Marc Gasol and O.J. Mayo added 22 points apiece as the Grizzlies won their third straight.

Wizards 105, 76ers 98

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas was brilliant at the beginning and end, and quiet in between, leading Washington over Philadelphia.

Arenas scored the game's first seven points and finished the opening quarter with 15. After adding only two points in each of the next two periods, he came out of his shell in the fourth, scoring 12 to finish with 31 points, eight rebounds but only two assists.

Rockets 108, Clippers 99

In Houston, Carl Landry matched his career high with 27 points in his first game back after dental surgery, helping the Houston Rockets beat the Los Angeles Clippers.

Landry damaged five teeth Friday night when he took an elbow to the mouth from Dallas' Dirk Nowitzki. He went 7 for 10 from the field and 13 for 15 from the free-throw line as Houston beat the Clippers for the 10th time in 11 games.

Chris Kaman had a career-high 29 points for the Clippers, who haven't won in Houston since Dec. 23, 2006. Baron Davis added 18.

Shirley's caging opening moved to Jan. 31

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 2010 Shirley's Coffee Shop Invitational Basketball League has moved its opening date from Jan. 3 to Jan. 31 to give way to other leagues.

There are three ongoing leagues on the island, the UBA, PILCOWA, and government/business caging, and these are expected to be completed next month, paving the way for teams to join the second edition of the Shirley's league.

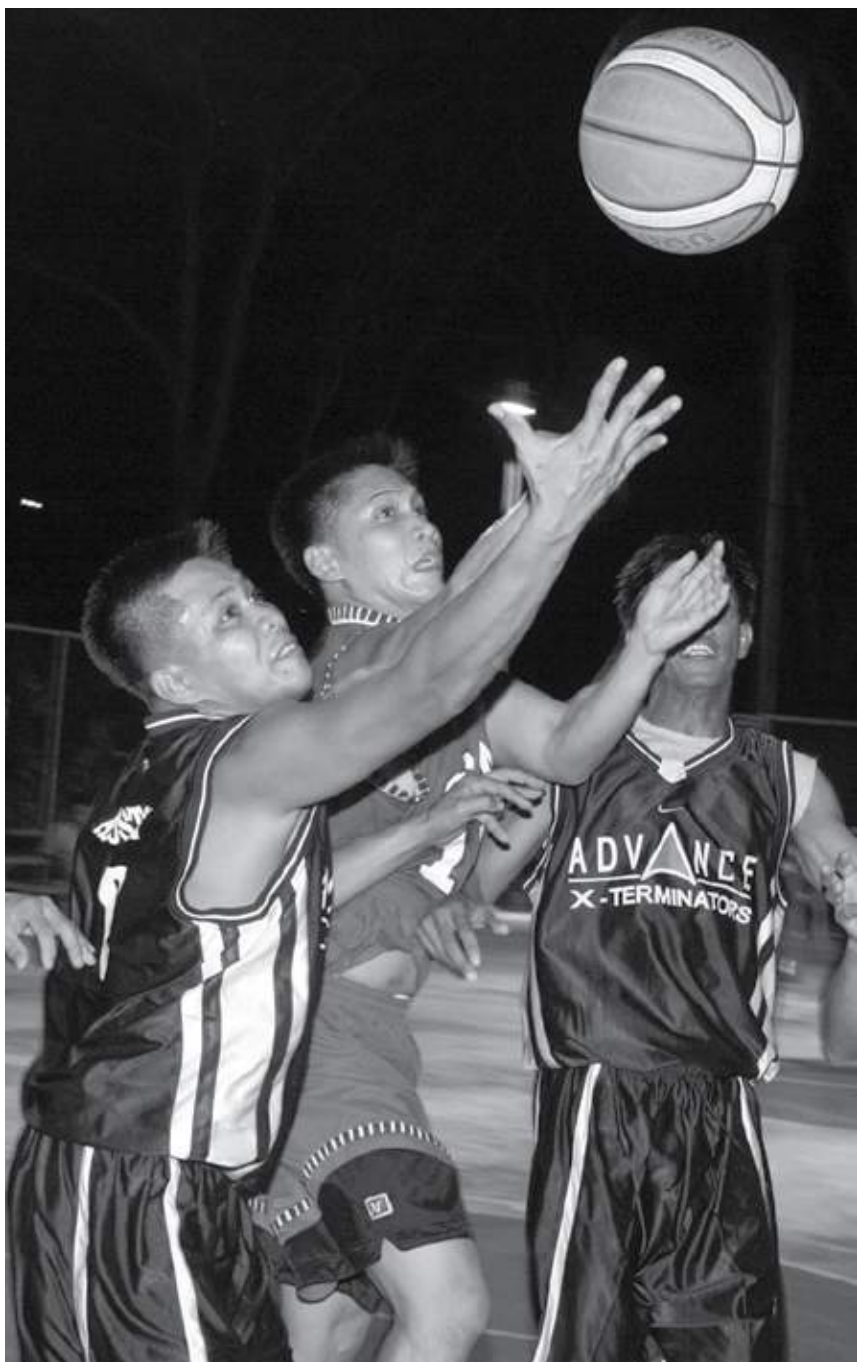
League coordinator Boy Lingcaso said so far 14 teams have already expressed their interest in participating in the Shirley's caging with Wushin and Noni Saipan joining the first 12 squads. However, only the first 12 to register and complete the league requirements will be allowed to play.

The initial 12 teams which have signified their intentions to compete in next year's caging are inaugural participants Micronesian Brokers, Inc. Advance Xterminators, G4S Security, Pepsi, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, and host Shirley's as well as newcomers Bank of Guam, Microl Corp., Mc Donald's, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Mobil Oil Marianas, and Aqua Resort Club.

Lingcaso said great prizes await participating teams in the opening and award ceremonies. Shirley's will give awards to teams with the best uniform and best muse during the traditional parade of squads. Trophies will then be awarded to the Top 3 finishers, while top individual performers will also be recognized. At the end of each match, the host will choose the Shirley's Best Player of the Game.

MBI is next season's defending champion, as it swept Advance in the 2009 best-of-three finals, winning Games 1 (74-71) and 2 (89-70). The Kitz Barja-coached MBI stunned pennant champion G4S in the semifinals, 66-59, to notch a spot to the best-of-three title series. The X-Terminators gained the second finals sear after eking out an upset over Fiesta Resort in the other semis game (87-80).

For more information about next year's Shirley's caging, contact Lingcaso at 233-4519 or 287-2926.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Advance and Shirley's players battle for the loose ball during the inaugural Shirley's caging played mid this year at the JP Centre Basketball Court.

KAGMAN

From Page 28

When teaching students how to play the sport, da Silva said he reminded participants of three important things, namely using one's mind during the game, showing toughness, and having endurance.

He also needs to constantly remind students the dos and don'ts of rugby: no blocking; no forward passing; you can kick forward; and it is a continues play (no time outs).

Da Silva said after a few months of learning the sport, Kagman students have shown significant improvement and he is confident players will learn more.

"From where they started (no knowledge of the game), they have learned a lot. But they can always learn more," da Silva said.

The Kagman teacher said he hopes to bring rugby to other schools and have the Ayuyus play against teams from other schools.

Kagman is a member of Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization, which holds basketball, football, and volleyball leagues/tournaments every year. Students from Kagman and the two other public high schools on Saipan (Marianas High School and Saipan Southern High School) also play softball and baseball all yearlong.

PACQUIAO

From Page 28

said. "We're eager to fight."

The fight, which promises to be the richest ever, had widely been expected to be formalized this week, with an official announcement Jan. 6. It was expected to be held at the MGM Grand hotel, with the biggest live gate ever.

But neither fighter has signed formal contracts and there have been disputes between representatives of the two fighters ever since Mayweather's promoter pulled out at the last minute of a trip to Texas, where Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones was to make a proposal to host the bout.

But Mayweather's promoter, Richard Schaefer, said all other issues have been agreed upon.

"The good news is we have agreed on all the other points," Schaefer said. "Depending on what Manny Pacquiao decides to do we either have a fight or we don't have a fight."

Schaefer said he is still hopeful of the fight happening, based on the fact Pacquiao himself has not publicly said he would not accept blood testing.

"I am still hopeful because I really believe this decision didn't come from Manny Pacquiao, it came from somebody else," Schaefer said. "It's up to Manny Pacquiao to prove me right or wrong."

Pacquiao has never failed a post-fight urine test in Nevada, including his last fight when he stopped Miguel Cotto. Mayweather also has passed urine tests in the state after his fights.

Fighters, though, are not routinely tested before bouts for performance-enhancing drugs, and there are no blood tests done for those drugs.

Mayweather's father, Floyd Sr., said after the Cotto fight that he suspected Pacquiao was using performance-enhancing drugs to move up and win titles in so many weight classes. Ellerbe did not make that claim, but said that for a fight of such magnitude fans deserve to be confident neither fighter is cheating.

"If it's good enough for LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Michael Phelps and Lance Armstrong why isn't it good enough for Manny Pacquiao?" Ellerbe asked. "The fans and sports deserve a level playing field."

Travis Tygart, executive director of the USADA, said he had talked to representatives of both fighters about providing testing. Tygart said he welcomed the request as he would for any sport that does not have stringent Olympic-type testing.

"I think every sport that wants to have clean athletes it's a sign of a step forward to have out of competition testing," Tygart said. "It's an essential thing to do if you want to protect the integrity of the sport. Clean athletes want a level playing field."

Tygart noted Olympic athletes are tested often and without notice. He said less than a teaspoon of blood is removed out of an average of 380 teaspoons in the normal human and that it regenerates within an hour of being withdrawn.

Blood tests, he said, can find things urine tests can't, like the use of human growth hormone, synthetic hemoglobin or blood transfusions, all of which "certainly would aid in an endurance-type event."

Ellerbe said he couldn't imagine why Pacquiao wouldn't agree, especially considering both fighters would likely make more than $25 million for the bout.

"Only Manny Pacquiao can answer that question," Ellerbe said. "The ball is in his court."

JONES

From Page 28

In Auckland, where Jones first arrived after leaving Saipan first week of this month, he teamed up with Christian Duchnak of American Samoa. The Pacific Oceania tandem debuted in the boys' 14-and-under doubles with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Lyle Lazarus and Scott Purdie and then prevailed against the pair of James Bunyan and Trenton Leleni, 6-1, 6-1.

A walkover victory against the eighth-seeded tandem of Ben Holmes and Matej Minic moved Jones and Duchnak in the semifinals against the No. 2 seed duo of Arapeta Collier-Waiomio and Adam Gage-Brown. The second seeded pair ended the Pacific bets' winning run with a 6-1, 6-3 triumph in the semifinals.

Jones and Duchnak settled for a share of third to fourth place with tournament top seeds Arash Hafezi and Jack Heslin.

Jones and Duchnak also competed in the boys' 16-and-under doubles, but won only their first round match, downing Paul Brooks and Logan Walsh, 4-6, 6-4, 11-9. The Pacific Oceania tandem bowed to John Foote and Hafezi in the second round, 0-6, 3-6.

In the boys' 14-and-under singles, Jones shut out Chris Gollin in the first round, 6-0, 6-0, before losing to No. 15 seed Noah Gulick, 2-6, 3-6. Jones dropped to the consolation draw and also had a 1-1 record.

In the boys' 16-and-under singles, Jones got off to another good start, thumping Nathan Metzger, 9-5, before bowing to No. 10 pick Aaron Hicks, 1-6, 0-6. In the consolation draw, Jones won over Amer Behayaa and Lars Tolhurst.

Overall, Jones played 15 matches in the Auckland tournament, posting a 5-4 record in singles and 4-2 in doubles. He won 16 sets and lost 13 and claimed 132 games and dropped 119.

TRENCH

From Page 28

octagon cage.

Next up for Trench Tech is Trench Wars 12: "Battle Brawl" scheduled for April 23.

After two events on the eight sides, Trench Tech will take a break from the octagon stage and will shift action to the mat via The Art of War 5 All Island Grappling/ Submission Challenge 2010. The fifth edition of the grappling event is set for June 18.

Octagon bouts will return on July 30 with Trench Tech staging Rites of Passage 9: "Indestructible."

MMA fighters from Saipan will take a breather for more than three months, as Trench Tech's next event is scheduled in November. Trench Wars 13: "Vengeance" is set for Nov. 19.

Trench Tech will then close 2010 with a fans appreciation night through "Warriors Collide scheduled for Dec. 31.

Dates for all six events are subject for changes and venues will be announced weeks before the scheduled fights.

Trench Tech's last event for this year was Trench Wars 11: "Redemption" held at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort on Friday. Trench Wars 11 featured 12 exciting bouts, including three main events.

Jason "Rush Tarkong was pitted against Gil "The Guamaniac" Meno in one of the triple-treat and won in the first round, while Trench Tech's Tetsuji Kato and Guam's Alex Castro prevailed in the two other main events, beating Ilya Zelik and Fasi "Quikdraw" Jesse, respectively.

There were also seven supporting bouts with five of them featuring Guam fighters challenging Saipan bets. The visitors posted a 4-1 win in the Guam-Saipan duel. Giovanni "Palaxi" Sablan gave Saipan its lone victory in Redemption, stopping Wyneu "1 Time" Bamba. In the two initial bouts before the Saipan vs. Guam match, Jeff "Thunder' Cloud and Lionel "The Hellion" Borkja prevailed over Rob "Pitbull" Palacios and "Big" Ron Chisato, respectively.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	22	5	.815	–
Toronto	13	17	.433	10 1/2
New York	11	17	.393	11 1/2
Philadelphia	7	21	.250	15 1/2
New Jersey	2	26	.071	20 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	21	7	.750	–
Atlanta	20	7	.741	1/2
Miami	13	12	.520	6 1/2
Charlotte	11	16	.407	9 1/2
Washington	9	17	.346	11

Central Division

Cleveland	21	8	.724	–
Milwaukee	12	14	.462	7 1/2
Detroit	11	17	.393	9 1/2
Chicago	10	17	.370	10
Indiana	9	18	.333	11

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	20	9	.690	–
Houston	17	11	.607	2 1/2
San Antonio	15	10	.600	3
Memphis	13	15	.464	6 1/2
New Orleans	12	14	.462	6 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	19	9	.679	–
Portland	18	12	.600	2
Utah	16	12	.571	3
Oklahoma City	13	14	.481	5 1/2
Minnesota	5	24	.172	14 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	23	4	.852	–
Phoenix	18	10	.643	5 1/2
Sacramento	13	14	.481	10
L.A. Clippers	12	16	.429	11 1/2
Golden State	7	20	.259	16

Yesterday's Games

Charlotte 88, Detroit 76
Washington 105, Philadelphia 98
New York 88, Chicago 81
Boston 103, Indiana 94
Memphis 121, Golden State 108
Atlanta 112, Minnesota 87
Portland 85, Dallas 81
Houston 108, L.A. Clippers 99
L.A. Lakers 111, Oklahoma City 108

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

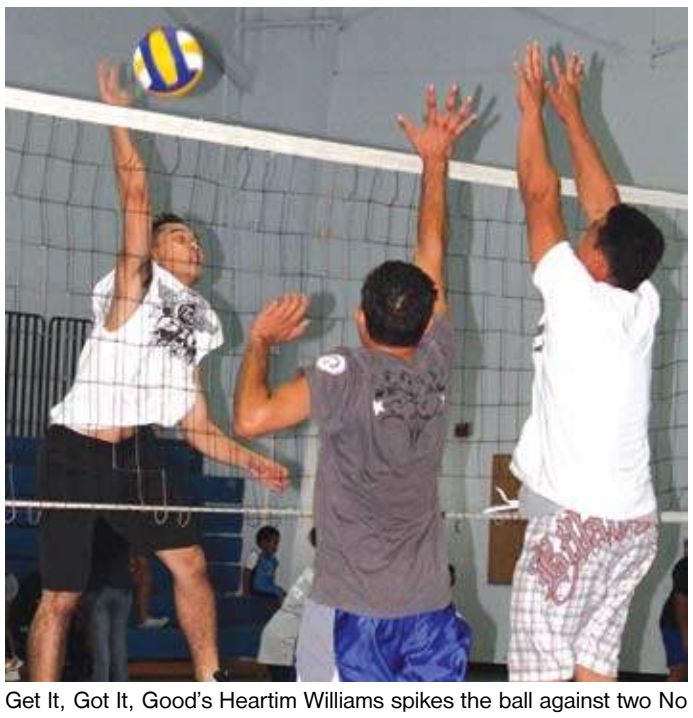
2009 Christmas Drug Free Volleyball Tournament

Photos By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Tinian player leaps for a kill during warms up before their game against the Islanders in the 2009 Christmas Drug Free Volleyball Tournament at the Marianas High School Gymnasium on Saturday.

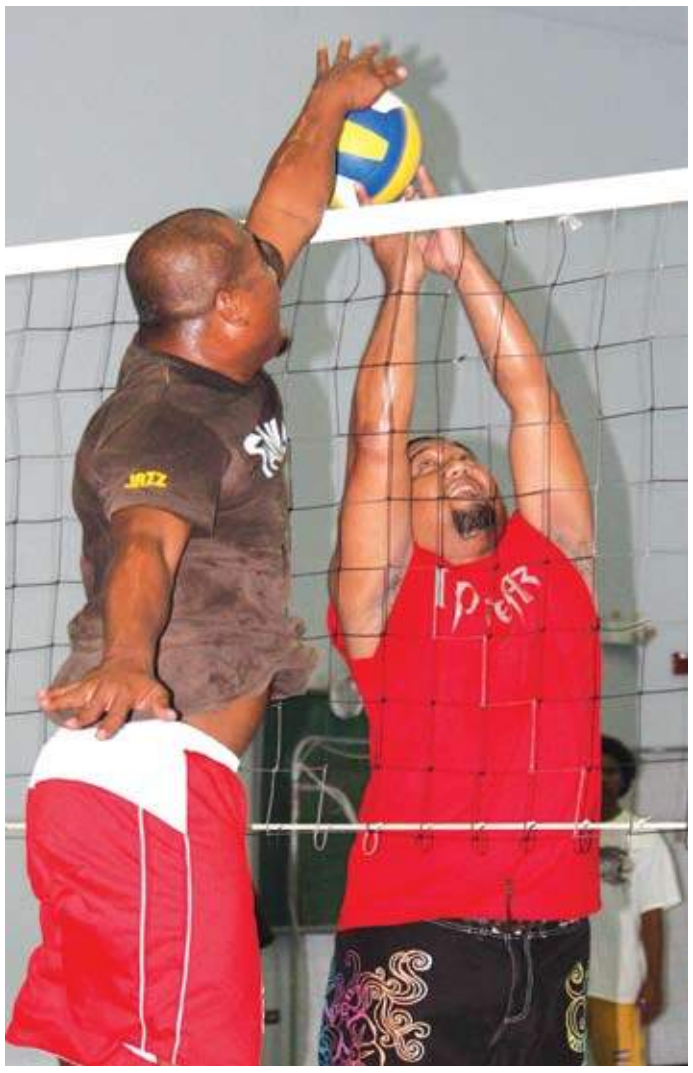
Mayumi Ogumoro of Platinum Slammers returns to Silly Girls during their playoff match.

Silly Girls huddle during a timeout.



Get It, Got It, Good's Heartim Williams spikes the ball against two No Fear blockers.

No Fear's Pete Iguel elevates for a spike.



Get It, Got It, Good's Jazz Roscow, left, blocks a No Fear player.

Get It, Got It, Good's Luther Taylor serves.

A Tinian player makes a toss.

No Fear's Jonas Barcinas returns to Get It, Got It, Good.

The Islanders' Dan Barcinas goes for a kill during their game against Tinian.

Shirley's caging opening moved to Jan. 31

The 2010 Shirley's Coffee Shop Invitational Basketball League has moved its opening date from Jan. 3 to Jan. 31 to give way to other leagues.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Fiancee of late Bengals' Henry: He changed my life

Chris Henry's fiancee wept as she spoke about the late Cincinnati Bengals receiver Tuesday, saying that while she often got credit for helping him stay clear of trouble, he changed her life as well.

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Kagman students get rugby 101 lessons

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Kagman High School students hold a rugby scrimmage after school hours.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Students in Kagman High School have added another sport on their list of activities that keep the Ayuyus busy all yearlong.

Former collegiate player and now U.S. history and government teacher Trevor da Silva introduced rugby to Kagman students and even his fellow teachers a few weeks after the 2009-2010 school year started in September.

Rugby, according to Britannica encyclopedia is a sport first developed in the 1820s at Rugby School in England. The game is played in a rectangular field 110 yards long by two teams with each squad having 15 (union) or 13 (league) members each and uses an inflated oval ball. The ball may be kicked, carried, or passed laterally or backward, but not forward.

The object is to score goals (worth three points) by kicking the ball between the uprights of the opponent's goal, or tries (worth five points in union play, four in league), by grounding the ball behind the opponent's goal line. A conversion kick (worth two points) is attempted after scoring a try.

"I arrived on Saipan about four months ago. I introduced rugby to the school the third week of the school year and at first students were confused but excited at the same time when we started," said da Silva, who came to Saipan from Oregon and played college rugby for four and a half years.

"I decided to share them my knowledge about the game because rugby is the ultimate team sport so I thought that the kids would love it and they did," he added.

Da Silva said when he began introducing the basics of the sport, more than 30 students showed up at the field.

"Now we have about 20-23 who come to practice regularly," said da Silva, adding they practice every Tuesday and Thursday after school hours or at 3:30pm.

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Pacquiao-Mayweather fight in jeopardy

AP

In this combination of file photos, U.S. boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr., left, prepares to spar at a gym in east London on May 22, 2009, and Manny Pacquiao, right, of the Philippines, weighs in for the junior welterweight boxing match against British boxer Ricky Hatton, May 1, 2009, in Las Vegas.

By TIM DAHLBERG
AP BOXING WRITER

BOXING

LAS VEGAS (AP)—The proposed megafight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. was thrown into jeopardy Tuesday with a demand by Mayweather's camp that both fighters be subjected to Olympic-type drug testing in the weeks leading up to the bout.

Mayweather's manager said the fight would not go on if Pacquiao didn't agree to blood testing under standards followed by the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

"There is no fight without Olympic-style random drug testing," Leonard Ellerbe said.

Mayweather's camp claims it was told Pacquiao would not agree to have his blood tested within 30 days of the fight because of personal superstitions. But Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, said he could live with some testing, as long as it wasn't too close to the fight and wasn't overly intrusive.

"I will not let my fighter take a blood test the day before a fight," Roach said. "If they give me a five-day window or something like that I have no problem with it."

Roach said he hoped the issue wasn't brought up as a way to get Mayweather out of the fight.

"He's looking for a back door out," Roach

See PACQUIAO on Page 26

Jones marches to semifinals in Auckland

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

ITF

CNMI junior netter Rafael Jones had a strong finish in his campaign in New Zealand, advancing to the semifinals of the boys' 14-and-under doubles division of the 2009 Auckland Christmas Tournament.

The tournament in Auckland, which ran from Dec. 17 to 23, was the last of Jones' three events in New Zealand. He first played in the 2009 Coca Cola Waikato Junior Tournament in Hamilton where he and teammate Ngana Nicholas of the Cook Islands marched into the quarterfinals of the boys' 14-and-under and 16-and-under doubles. Jones next stop was in Gisborne, but results of his games were unavailable on the website of New Zealand tennis.

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Jones

Trench Tech lines up 6 events for 2010

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Guam's Hosea "Killa B" Ware goes for a kick against Russia's Iliev Ismail during their 185-lb bout in Trench Wars 11: Redemption held Friday at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

TRENCH TECH

Trench Tech will have a busy schedule next year, as it will offer six action-packed mixed martial arts events for 2010.

Cuki Alvarez and his Trench Tech promotion will kick off 2010 with the Rites of Passage 8: "Fearless." Its initial offering for next year set for Feb. 12 will introduce new fighters from Guam and Saipan to the

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